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THE TOLL OF THE BUSH.

CHAPTER XV.

It was two days since Sven Andersen had set off full of good intentions for the future, and he was still within a dozen miles of his home. Where he had been in the meantime was best known to himself; but for all improvement that had been wrought in his appearance he had better have remained elsewhere. As he moved along the dusty road, talking and gesticulating to himself, occasionally pausing to glare savagely at some object by the roadside, or, still worse, to express amusement at his thoughts in a harsh laugh, he had the look of a man well advanced in intoxication; but he was not drunk, unless drunkenness be given a wider interpretation than is usually allowed to the word.

"Either drunk or mad," was the reflection of a person watching him approach from a verandah a hundred yards or so down the road. "Not drunk in his gait," he added awhile later; "mad, then." And the man rose to his feet and went into the house.

A counter ran across the room in front of the door, and behind this stood a young man busy with an account-book. Piles of cheap prints, stacks of tobacco, candles, soap, and other universal necessities on shelves round the walls showed the nature of the business sought to be conducted.

The man from the verandah seated

himself on a cabin-bread case near the doorway and announced the approach of the supposed madman. "Who is he?" he asked with a faint interest.

The storekeeper craned his neck eagerly to look along the road. "Why, it's Andersen," he said, relapsing into indifference. "He's not mad; he's a foreigner. He's probably drunk; any way, Mr. Wickener," he added, "he generally is."

But Andersen seemed neither drunk nor mad as he entered the store and nodded composedly to its occupants. Then he approached the storekeeper and whispered something in his ear.

"Not a taste," said the latter aloud. "Dry as a sack of gum dust, I give you my word."

Andersen looked over his shoulder at the other man and continued his solicitations aloud. "Von leedle tree finger, M'Gregor, like a goot fellow."

"I haven't got it, Andersen. I tell you there isn't such a thing in the place, so that's enough about it."

Andersen sat down and ran his eye over the shelves. "You haf de Painkiller?" he asked presently.

"Not a drop," said M'Gregor, lying cheerfully; "the men at the camp on the new road took the last bottle yesterday."

"Vot dat red bottles, like a goot fellow?"

"Sauce—Worcester. And this is castor-oil, and that's sheep-dip, and

yonder's embrocation, and the spirits of salts is under the counter."

"Ach, Mac's the poy for the jhoke," said Andersen, laughing boisterously and turning a pair of mirthless, blood-shot eyes on the other person present. "Dat Vooster's horse, I vill take him," he concluded suddenly.

"The price is two shillings a bottle," said the storekeeper, without moving.

There was a short pause.

"I have not the pleasure of this gentleman's acquaintance," said Mr. Wickener, coming forward with a smile; "but sooner than the matter should terminate here, I would request permission to act as host to this excellent company. I should esteem it an honour if Mr. Andersen would drink my health in Worcester sauce or embrocation, or any other beverage he might prefer."

M'Gregor handed over the bottle without more ado, and leaping on the counter, unhooked a tin pannikin from a string in the rafters. Andersen withdrew the stopper, and giving the bottle a shake poured the contents into the tin.

"Here's your very goot heals," he said, nodding to Wickener, and drained the pannikin to the bottom.

"An inside like that must cost a shilling or two," M'Gregor opined.

Mr. Wickener seemed much interested. "Have another," he suggested; "or perhaps you would prefer a little embrocation? Fill 'em up again, M'Gregor."

Andersen, however, professed himself satisfied, and picking up his pikau, betook himself to a seat on the verandah. Wickener lifted the empty bottle, smelt it curiously, and followed the other outside.

"A nice morning, Mr. Andersen," he said; "warm, but just the weather to make one relish a cooling drink. Are there any after-effects from Worcester sauce, by the way?"

"It is the hollow," Andersen explained; "the crave to fill him. When man has warrked mooch in bush and wet and rheumatism, then Vooster's horse very goot." He got out a wooden pipe and felt tentatively in the bowl with one finger.

"Tobacco?" suggested Wickener with alacrity. "M'Gregor, tobacco and matches. You live somewhere about here?"

Andersen's face darkened suddenly, and he clenched the pipe in his hand till the knuckles whitened; then he pointed vaguely along the road. "I got vife in the bush," he said.

"Good place to keep one," Wickener observed, surveying the landscape; "room, in fact, for more than one."

"My Gott, there is not room for one," was the rapid response. "Should man have more than one vife? Gott prevent him!" Andersen twisted himself on his seat and laughed harshly.

"So that's the way the wind blows!" Wickener said, his eyes glittering. "Domestic unhappiness, eh? Woman! What follows? Alcohol, Worcester sauce, embrocation. Curse them, and I'll give you curse for curse. Begin!"

"Ach, the wretches!" said Andersen.

"——!" said Wickener.

Andersen clenched his hands. "All day you leave them and warrk, warrk, then you kom back. Vot you find? Nuther man's drunk all the visky."

"True bill," said Wickener. "——! Set 'em up again."

"They got no decent like a man; they got no feeling like a man. She all flower and pretty things on top, and underneath the devil."

"——!" said Wickener.

Andersen drew back and regarded his companion. "You haf a vife too?" he asked.

Wickener dropped back into listless-

ness. "What about the man?" he asked.

Andersen hugged himself and looked cunning, but he did not reply.

"Don't be in a hurry," said Wickener. "The best pleasure is in anticipation. Combine poetry with justice. Don't hit a man when he's down—because you can't hurt him enough. Hit him on the top of a precipice if possible. Andersen, I like you. Have another Worcester? No? Then name your drink."

Mr. Wickener's liking was shown in the fact that a week later the Swede was still domiciled in the store as the guest of his singular companion.

M'Gregor, the storekeeper, who had been ready enough to accommodate the English stranger with board and lodging, raised no objection to this addition to the family when he understood that all charges were to be borne by Wickener. The Englishman's tastes were peculiar, no doubt, but his payments were made in advance, and he showed a lordly indifference to details which appealed favourably to a man whose predilections were all in the opposite direction. If M'Gregor troubled himself at all to find a reason for the Englishman's patronage of the other, such reason was probably associated with Andersen's morbid craving for liquid excitement. Wickener seemed to take a pleasure in indulging his *protégé*, in season and out of season, to the top of his grotesque bent. He had, however, privately admonished the storekeeper to beware of the admission that there were any spirituous drinks on the premises.

It was not until Wickener had been a fortnight in the house that he discovered that the Maori woman who did the cooking, and whose shrill voice was occasionally heard from the kitchen, was the storekeeper's wife.

The lady, in fact, was the first to supply the information, and though M'Gregor seemed disposed to minimise the fact, he did not actually commit himself to a denial of its accuracy. Her features were plain, even for a Maori, but she was young and her eyes were brilliant, and once the ice was broken, she was not indisposed to be communicative. Mr. Wickener had many questions to ask, and made full use of his opportunities. He appeared, so far as could be gathered from casual remarks, to have come straight to his present habitation immediately on his arrival in the country. He was absurdly ignorant on the most ordinary colonial matters, and, it may be added, indifferent; but trivial things occasionally interested him to the point of enthusiasm. He had a stock question with regard to every Maori name,—what did it mean? It seemed to astonish him that every hill, vale, creek, clump of trees, and rock had its own individual designation. "Well, what is the name of this place? Eh? What's that? 'Why-kick-her-why-whack-her'? Really, I have no notion."

Tapai considered his humour of the most exquisite character, and was always ready to provide him with a name or a meaning, for the pleasure of hearing him mispronounce the former, and of noting his frequent astonishment at the latter. It is characteristic of Maori names that they are descriptive often to an embarrassing degree.

"So *wai* is pronounced *wy*, and means *water*,—I see. Then *Wairangi* will mean *watery-sky*."

Tapai laughed heartily. "You got the cart before the horse," she said. "*Wairangi* will mean *skyey-water*. That Major Milward, his place *Wairangi*."

"Ah!—Major Milward—a settler I suppose!"

"Major Milward the big ranga-tira," Tapaia explained with respect. "He the first of all the European to come here. This time he got the sheep station, the kauri bush, the gum-field, plenty big stores. You know my husband!—he the store-keeper before."

"Oh, indeed! and who is the store-keeper now?" Wickener enquired with polite interest.

"Mr. Raymond came after my husband, then Mr. Hernshaw."

"Hernshaw? Surely you have mentioned the name previously?"

"He and his brother have a section in the bush near to Mr. Andersen."

"Yes, yes, of course, so you told me. And one of them is storekeeping for this Major—er—Milward? That will be the one who was born here, I suppose! By the way, I think you told me one of them was born here, while the other emigrated only a year or so back! Or am I confusing the families?"

"No, that is right; but Geoffrey Hernshaw is the storekeeper, and he is the one from England."

"Oh, indeed! that will be a nice change for him," and Mr. Wickener smothered a yawn.

"Major Milward any family?" he asked presently.

"He two children here—Eve and Sandy. Eve the pretty girl."

"Aha! Any chance for a young man of my complexion!"

"That Hernshaw's girl, I suppose," Tapaia replied laughing. "Kapai! you make a try, perhaps."

Mr. Wickener looked with smiling reflection at a fly-blown almanac on the wall. "Hernshaw again," he said quietly. "No, no, dear lady; though the contemplation of Mr. M'Gregor's happiness must ever provide a powerful incentive, there is no guarantee

¹ Good.

that I shall be equally fortunate. Once bitten, twice shy."

The friendship between the Swede and the English stranger developed rapidly as the days wore by. Neither seemed to find his lack of occupation galling, or to be in a hurry to move on elsewhere. The spot was a lonely one, but little disturbed either by travellers or customers, and but that Wickener had learned from Tapaia that the land for thousands of acres around was her private property, he might have wondered at the singularity of M'Gregor's choice in establishing himself so far from civilisation. The pair spent most of their day in the shadow of the tree ferns on the edge of the sweltering bush road, retiring into the denser growth when the heat became unbearable to the unaccustomed Englishman.

Mr. Wickener was soon in possession of the family history of the Andersens, and it formed a constant subject for discussion between the two men.

"Yours is not exactly a strong case, Andersen," Wickener remarked thoughtfully once, "because there is a certain amount of culpability on your side. Still that does not excuse the other man. Nothing excuses the other man. Make a note of that."

"Nuttings," Andersen agreed.

"By the way, you have never been the other man yourself, I suppose? Ah, well, don't protest! How far have you got? Have you reached the boiling-oil stage yet?"

Andersen nodded morosely.

"Yes," Wickener mused, "it's interesting, no doubt, and picturesque, but it passes. The law of evolution holds even here; by and by you will come to higher things."

"What things?" Andersen asked.

"The higher hatred, my boy; perhaps even to the perfect hate that passeth understanding. Observe the

analogy between love and hate. There is first distaste that precedes dislike and develops loathing; it is the same, by obverse stages, with the full-blown passion of love. Treasure these words, Andersen, my boy, for I shall not always be by to instruct and guide you. Then comes the brooding on the beloved or hated image; the hundred situations, fervently conceived and as intensely desired, the passive mood becoming the active, the drawing of the loved or hated one's attention, the threat, the promise, and so on up the scale, through all the heightening tones, to consummation — devoutly to be wished." He stopped, his glittering gaze fixed on a point opposite to him, and was silent.

"Is yours the hate perfect?" Andersen asked after awhile.

"Sometimes I am inclined to think so, my friend; at others I seem to descry an unattainable greatness just out of reach. Contrast my stage and yours. You would kill Beckwith by slow torture of — shall we say? — a few days' duration, and then an end. Afterwards what will you do? You cannot expect two such passions in a lifetime; the gods are more chary of their gifts. Keep it, keep it, my boy, to warm your bones when you grow old. As for me, I can wait. I have become an artist in the matter. Nothing but the best will satisfy me. I want the supreme moment. If I could en throne my man above the world, if I could load him with all that the earth, or better still, with all that he himself holds desirable, I would do it, that in the next instant I might tear him down and leave him naked and accursed."

The man's voice was light and bantering, and a mocking smile played across his features; yet Andersen, only partly comprehending him, shuddered as he listened.

"Vot you do with your man ven you got him?" the Swede asked with a shrinking curiosity.

Wickener stretched himself and laughed. "We are discussing your affair, my boy," he said placidly, "and it is a peculiar one, because, as I have already told you, there are two sides to it. Take my advice and don't hurry. The killing stage passes, the lust for violence goes by. Live up to the great idea, and some day you may reach that sublimity of hatred that would dictate the words, 'Beckwith, take her!'"

CHAPTER XVI.

ALTHOUGH, as has been said, Mr. Wickener spent most of his time in Andersen's company in the vicinity of the store, yet he did make a few excursions farther afield, and on one occasion he was absent a whole night. Of these journeyings he said nothing to Andersen, neither did he invite that gentleman's society, even though the Swede might happen to be a witness of his departure. Affable and companionable as the Englishman had proved himself, there was yet a certain aloofness in his manner which forbade question.

One of these rambles, for it seemed to be nothing more, brought him out above the river in the neighbourhood of the Hernshaws' section. It was a blazing summer afternoon, when to the idle man the mere thought of labour is a horror, yet there was a young man busily hoeing at the crops on the hilltop, and whistling as he worked. The whistling was good, and Wickener, when his astonishment at its mere possibility had been overcome, found himself listening with enjoyment. All the birds of the bush and the settlement appeared to have combined to produce that melodious theme. There was the solemn chuckle

of the tui, as at some joke really too exquisite for ordinary laughter; there was the plaintive trill of the *riro-riro*, in whose nest squats the cuckoo's offspring; the jarred bleat of the fantail; then the rollicking music of the European thrush, the scream of the parrot, the squeal of the morepork; finally, the ventriloquial crescendos of the shining cuckoo. Now and then a bird answered sleepily from the bush. "Tonk, tonk!" said the tui. "Wait till it gets cooler and I'll talk to you."

Mr. Wickener had found a tree easy of ascent and climbed into the fork. After awhile he was in danger of going to sleep himself.

The whistling began again presently, half a dozen birds together apparently, then there was a little gurgle of amused laughter much closer at hand. Fully awakened, Mr. Wickener peered down. Something white was passing underneath his hiding-place. A hat with a girl beneath it,—a girl with the sunniest curls in the world. Mr. Wickener obscured himself still further and watched.

The girl came out of the bush, crossed the road, and slipping through the rails, walked soberly towards the young man on the higher ground. Presently the latter looked up and espied her; next moment they were together, walking hand-in-hand to the house, the girl's face turned upwards, the man's down.

"Young love," said the watcher to himself, with a cynical twist of the lips.

The pair passed out of sight behind the house, and there was a long ten minutes of waiting; then the girl reappeared, walking backwards, laughing and talking, every motion of her body a poem, the man after her, slowly, like a worshipper. A few moments of delay and the girl turned and ran towards the slip-rails.

Wickener examined her as she

came, with a curious feeling of likeness about her to some one he knew. To whom? She was too lovely to be forgotten had he ever really seen her before. The girl passed with light step under the tree and away down the track and out of sight. The watcher sat quiet for a moment, then let himself down and followed.

It was only a short distance through the bush to the bare hill above Andersen's house, and Wickener was hard on the girl's heels as she reached the slip-rail.

"Pardon me," he said, raising his hat as she turned. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Miss Andersen?"

A new face in the settlement was a thing as startling as rare, and this one appeared to have sprung suddenly out of the earth.

"I am Lena Andersen," the girl said after a moment.

"I am fortunate in discovering you so easily, Miss Andersen. I trust I am guilty of no discourtesy in addressing you here rather than in the house."

Lena looked at her interlocutor. He was a man probably thirty-five years of age, with a fair skin, a trim brown beard, and singularly bright eyes. There was nothing insolent or repulsive in his manner, which, on the contrary, was full of a polite respect.

"Will you walk into the house and see mother?" Lena suggested.

"I will not disturb Mrs. Andersen on this occasion," said the stranger after a moment's hesitation, which included a glance at the building; "more especially as my business is with yourself. I am the bearer of a message from your father. He is some distance away, but I happened to have—an appointment in the neighbourhood, and so—" Mr. Wickener concluded the sentence with a friendly smile.

"I hope father is well?" Lena said

with more animation; "and I'm sure it is very kind of you to trouble. Where is he now?"

"So far as my information permits me, he is at a place called "Whick-kick-her-why-whack-her," but you are probably more conversant with the peculiarities of Maori topography than I am."

Lena looked puzzled. "And what is the message, Mr. —?"

"Wickener is my name. The message I am afraid is rather a prosaic one. It consists in fact of five effigies in gold of her gracious majesty the Queen. I will ask you to relieve me of their responsibility." And Mr. Wickener handed her the coins with the humorous suggestion that his fingers were being scorched.

"And is this really from father?" Lena asked, looking at the little pile of sovereigns in her palm. "Oh, sir, I am glad, not altogether for the money's sake, but on account of something that passed between us when he went away! Will you tell him that from me, with my love?" The girl's face was dazzling in its animation, and there was a suggestion of tears in her eyes.

"I fear I can hardly promise to deliver any message, Miss Andersen," Wickener said slowly, and for the first time avoiding her direct gaze. "It is not absolutely certain that your father will remain at the place with the mysterious name, or, indeed, that I shall return there. I would not, if I were you, take any steps in the matter."

"What, not even thank him?" asked Lena in surprise.

Mr. Wickener appeared to reflect a moment. "Forgive me," he said, "if what I am about to say should betray a closer knowledge of your family affairs than you would naturally care to be in the possession of a mere stranger; but from a knowledge of

your father's character I am bound to think that it will be best to accept his offering without comment or even thanks."

"Oh, sir," said Lena, "how can we do that?"

"I make the suggestion, Miss Andersen, with the best intentions. After all, the matter is in your own hands, and I have no kind of right to interfere."

"I should be glad to follow advice given with the kindest intentions," Lena said gently; "if it were not that I must appear ungrateful to father."

Mr. Wickener smiled pleasantly. "Believe a man of the world of probably twice your years, Miss Andersen," he said, "that the expression of gratitude in so many words is not the safest way to ensure a continuation of gratuities. I do not presume to think that that argument will influence you, but I perceive a number of children in the background, as it were," — he waved his hand towards the rear of the paddock, where a portion of the flour-bag brigade were noisily disporting themselves — "on whose behalf a certain amount of sordid calculation would be, to say the least, excusable. Forgive me, if my candour appears offensive."

"You are very good," Lena said. "I can only thank you for the trouble you have taken and for your thoughtfulness."

"No thanks," said Mr. Wickener. "Delighted to be of service." And with a generous exposure of his hair he took his departure.

"A good action is its own reward," mused Mr. Wickener, as he descended into the bush. "Also two and two make four and p-s-h-a-w spells pshaw?" He repeated the word with varied inflections of disgust

once or twice aloud as he went his way. "Pshaw!" Engrossed in his thoughts, he followed his feet without attention and presently they struck against a root and brought him to a standstill. He found himself on a narrow, worn track in place of the wide road he remembered to have traversed in his coming. Retracing his steps, he came on two tracks and, following one at random, arrived in the course of a few minutes at three more.

"Ah, would you!" said Mr. Wickener admonishingly to the silent forest. "You don't catch old birds with snuff," he reminded the landscape. With careful steps he returned to the original track and went doggedly down it. "A path like this leads somewhere," he soliloquised; "and somewhere is where I desire to go." Presently he found himself in a clearing with a house at the farther end. In front of the house was a group of three people—a woman and two boys, the latter busily engaged in chopping firewood.

Mr. Wickener made his way through the stumps, becoming the cynosure of all eyes before he had traversed half the distance to the house. They were keen eyes, all of them, and the keenest belonged to the lady.

"Pardon this intrusion, madam," he began; "I am a stranger in this neighbourhood, and I have had the misfortune to miss the road."

"Then you are the first man that has ever done it," said Mrs. Gird. "There is only one road in the whole of the north country, and if you miss that you are completely done."

"This is consoling," said Wickener, taking another look at the lady. "What should you advise in the circumstances?"

"I can think of nothing more appropriate than tea," said Mrs. Gird

cheerfully. "Mark, run and see if the kettle is boiling. Stay a moment; this is my eldest son, Mark—Mark Gird."

"Wickener is my name," said the Englishman for the second time that day, as he shook hands with the boy.

"And this is Rowland," said the lady, bringing forward her second son.

Mr. Wickener repeated the salutation and remarked that they were fine children.

"My husband is an invalid," Mrs. Gird said, leading the way to the house. "He was injured some years ago by an accident in the bush. I mention the fact that you should not be shocked, as he is very sensitive of the effect of his appearance on others."

"I am grateful for the information, madam."

"It is plain that you are from England," Mrs. Gird said bluntly; "a colonial might have felt as you do, but he would not have expressed himself so happily."

Mr. Wickener bowed. "Your diagnosis is correct," he said. "I have been less than a month in the country."

Mr. Gird sat erect in his chair, the light still burning in his sunken eyes. No motion of the pupils, no flutter of the eyelids greeted the stranger; only in the depths of the eyes was a light that seemed to betray consciousness and showed that the motionless figure lived. What passed behind that sealed countenance,—what thoughts, what memories, what sufferings, who shall say! Day after day, week by week, year in, year out, he sat there, forgotten of Death, like a shattered idol. Did love penetrate through that mask of death to the vital spark within? The woman thought so; in that faith she framed her life and

that of her children. May be it was all a delusion ; may be the thoughts she uttered as his were her own ; may be there was room there neither for love nor reason, neither for regret nor hope. Ah, but the woman knew better ! What though the gates of the senses were closed never to be undone, yet love spoke direct from spirit to spirit, and there was no message too trivial, none too strenuous for that ethereal messenger.

The table was already set for the evening meal, and Mrs. Gird invited her visitor to a seat without more ado.

"My stay in the country has not yet been long enough to diminish my sense of the hospitality of its inhabitants," Mr. Wickener observed as he seated himself.

"Hospitality is rather a large word with which to describe acts of common humanity."

"Happy is the country where common humanity is so broadly interpreted."

"That is very nice, but don't run away with an exaggerated idea of our virtues," said the lady. "We are an extremely mixed community ; for instance, there is probably as much hatred per square yard in this settlement as would suffice to keep two nations embroiled in constant warfare."

"Do you tell me so ? But the Lord loveth a cheerful hater."

"Then we are certainly His chosen people," said Mrs. Gird dubiously. "But aren't you confusing your text ? I remember that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

"Probably you are right," Mr. Wickener reflected. A moment later his lips had framed the word *Pshaw* ! "There should be enough scope here for people to live independently of their neighbours," he said presently. "You, for instance, must find a difficulty in

living up to the traditions of the settlement."

"Beyond our boundary there are a hundred miles of native bush land, sacred to the kiwi and the wild pig, so that we are preserved on that side. On the other we have the Andersens, with whom we simply refuse to quarrel."

"An excellent *casus belli*," said Mr. Wickener. "These Andersens appear to make but little use of their section," he added.

"You passed the place ? But of course you did ; that was where you missed your road. No, the father is a great deal from home. He is a bushman by trade ; a splendid worker when he likes, but not so much given to liking as might be wished."

"Poverty and neglect seem to be written large on the place, and from what I saw of the family, they deserve a better fate than to be sequestered there."

"Whom did you see ?" Mrs. Gird asked with interest.

"A young woman of prepossessing appearance, whose speech and manners seemed to be above her station."

"That would be Lena, the eldest girl—yes. But you must not be surprised at poor people speaking good English ; we are a very long way ahead of your countrymen in that respect, you know. Your people are handicapped by the fact that they have lived for hundreds of years in small communities, hence the language has been broken up into innumerable dialects. Our facilities for communication, on the other hand, enable us to speak one language, and our educational system ensures that that language shall be the best."

Mr. Wickener bowed but did not discuss the subject. Instead, he fell back on his stock amusement of Maori names.

"Pray enlighten me," he said,

after a few remarks on this head; "how is it that the native nomenclature is framed in the likeness of excellent, but apparently unanswerable conundrums? 'Why-carry-me,' for instance, and 'Why-make-a-row,' the two names you have just mentioned, and 'How-marry-her,' and 'Whaty-whaty-why-how,'—an excellent and typical specimen, by the way—do they, by any chance, mean what they say?"

The Gird boys were too well-bred to make any audible comment, but they watched Mr. Wickener with the intensest delight and appreciation from that moment; nor was it many days before the fame of him had run through the settlement even to its farthest outposts.

"Are you proposing to settle in this country, Mr. Wickener?" Mrs. Gird asked by and by.

"No, madam; suspicious as my actions may appear my intentions are, I assure you, innocent. I am a mere bird of passage—here to-day, gone to-morrow. A bird possessing the loquacity of—shall we say the jay?—and the curiosity of the magpie."

"From what part of England are you, Mr. Wickener?"

"From many parts of late, madam; but York is the county of my birth."

"My husband is a Yorkshireman; so also by birth are our neighbours the Hernshaws."

Mr. Wickener showed polite interest. "The latter, I presume, are settlers?" he asked.

"Yes, their section adjoins the Andersens. The elder brother is away for the present but the younger is at home."

"I wonder if I have seen him this afternoon. Is he by any chance given to amuse himself by whistling?"

"That is certainly Robert," Mrs. Gird said, smiling. "He is a nice boy—hard-working, sensible, straight-

forward, a good sample of the colonial-born youth at his best."

Mr. Wickener had it in his mind to ask if colonial-born youths were also adepts at love-making, but he held his tongue, and the meal shortly came to an end.

Mark was deputed to guide the stranger on to his road, a task which he undertook with considerable eagerness.

"The rippling of the waters," said Mr. Wickener as he stepped outside and caught the music of a neighbouring creek. "Who would have guessed that poetic answer to the conundrum, 'Why-carry-me?'"

Mrs. Gird nodded. "By the way," she said, "what is the meaning of York?"

Mr. Wickener acknowledged the shaft with a smile and a bow, and then he followed his guide across the paddock.

Mrs. Gird, as she stood in the doorway, remembering how little information had been vouchsafed to her in comparison with that which had been supplied by herself, was inclined to add to the loquacity of the jay and the curiosity of the magpie the secretiveness of the raven.

But she was destined to see a good deal more of Mr. Wickener, who, from whatever motives, developed a habit of calling at the house whenever, as happened not infrequently, he had occasion to visit the settlement.

CHAPTER XVII.

"It's a pity you ever found it out," said Robert, "if you are going to let it worry you. I had an idea that there was something of the kind, but it was mostly while father was alive, and if mother could bring herself to take it, surely we can."

"You knew her better than I ever did, Robert."

"That's the pity of it."

"You mean if I had known her I should have had no doubt as to how I ought to act now?"

"Something of that."

"I can't bring myself to seal up the pages again; there would seem to be something underhand about an act of that sort."

"Then don't seal them."

"But what am I to do?"

"Nothing."

Geoffrey looked thoughtfully at his brother, his face slowly clearing. "I am not sure but what you are right, and if it were not for one thing I should be certain of it. But the one thing seems to make all the difference. I am going to ask Eve Milward to marry me, and I don't want to owe her father £300 at the same time."

"I am glad you are going to do that," said Robert heartily; "and if I were you I wouldn't waste a moment before it was done. As for the money, it's none of your doing, and you are far more likely to do harm by harping on it than by letting it slide. Eve's not likely to trouble, nor is the Major. Pride's a proper thing in its way, no doubt, but you can easily have too much of it, seems to me."

Geoffrey was silent, but his countenance looked much more hopeful than when the matter was first broached.

"And there is another thing," continued Robert, "since we are at it, and that's Uncle Geoff. It has seemed to me for quite a long time now that you're treating him pretty hard. Seems to me there ought to be no question of pride between you and a man who has done for you as much as he has. It's little short of a sin to keep him at arm's length in the

way you do, and how he manages to put up with it beats me. He's the sort that if you wired to him for a few thousands, he'd want to get up in the middle of the night to cable it to you."

"It's true. I'm an ungrateful sort; but it's the confounded stiff-necked way in which I am made, Robert."

"Well, it may be. But if you want to marry Eve Milward, you will have to come down from that. I know you are a great deal cleverer than I am, Geoff, and better educated and all that, but it's struck me of late that I've got most of the common sense."

"I am convinced of it. Go on."

"Well, I was just about to say that if you are not going to accept anything from Uncle Geoffrey, you won't have much of a prospect to lay before Major Milward. Have you thought of that?"

"Not very deeply, I am afraid."

"Well, I would; or,—which is better than thinking—I would act. Write home to uncle, tell him the whole story, and throw yourself on his generosity. There's no doubt what the result will be."

"Then you think I am not capable of earning a living for myself?"

"Why shouldn't you be? But it's much simpler to have a good round sum in the bank, and it gives you a great deal more confidence, especially when it comes to facing a rich man like Major Milward. Besides, a bird in the hand doesn't prevent you going after the bird in the bush; it's the very thing to make you go."

"As to the round sum in the bank, you can hardly be speaking from experience, Robert," said Geoffrey smiling.

Robert looked slightly uneasy. "It's a good thing for every one," he said, "but it's more necessary to some than

to others. You've been brought up as a gentleman, and are more fitted to make money by your brains than your hands, therefore it's almost a necessity for you. As for me, I can get along all right, and my wife won't expect a great deal just at the first."

"You speak of that problematical lady with some assurance."

"Not more than I feel, however," Robert said.

Geoffrey looked up a little surprised, and something in his brother's countenance caught his wandering attention. "Is it possible the lady is not entirely problematical?" he asked.

"It's Lena Andersen."

"Lena! Good heavens! Why, you are only children!"

"We don't mind that," Robert said; "and we shall get over it in time."

"Of course. I beg your pardon. But you astonished me a good deal. Lena! Yes, I remember her," and Geoffrey's face, despite his endeavours, clouded slightly.

"She is a very clever girl," Robert alleged anxiously. "You should hear her read Shakespeare and—and Green's *Short*."

"That's something, Robert, isn't it?" Geoffrey said kindly. "And she promised to be a very pretty girl too."

"More than that," said Robert. "And good—good as gold,—too good for a rough chap like me."

"She doesn't think so, however, nor her parents probably." Geoffrey remembered with misgiving the untidy woman at the slip-rail and the stories current in the settlement of the drunken father. "I suppose you are not contemplating doing anything just immediately?" he asked.

"Well, I am," Robert confessed. "You see the family is in rather a bad way owing to Andersen's habits, and then there is a good deal of talk

in the settlement about Mrs. Andersen, and I should like to take Lena clean out of it all before worse happens. There is not a brighter little girl living, Geoff; but she's very tender-hearted, and that sort get hurt easily and badly." Robert's honest, eager eyes clouded suddenly.

"And how would you get her out?" Geoffrey asked sympathetically.

"There is only one way, Geoff."

"But aren't you afraid of taking a responsibility like that?"

"No," said Robert, squaring his broad shoulders, "I'm not afraid. At the worst she would be better off than she is now. I have tried to think for her as well as myself, but I can't find any better way. If you see any road out but that I should be glad to know of it."

"I should like to see her first," Geoffrey said. "Is it possible we can do so this afternoon?"

Robert found his coat in silence, and together the brothers set off on their errand.

Now Lena had desecrated Geoffrey as he rode past on his way to the section, and anticipating this conclusion to the interview, she had tidied the house and arrayed herself in the black velvet frock which was Mrs. Gird's gift. Robert had heard nothing of this garment, and he was consequently as much surprised as Geoffrey at the smart and lovely appearance presented by the young girl as she came out of the house, blushing divinely, yet with a certain charming self-possession to meet her lover and her prospective brother-in-law.

Lena stood a little in awe of Geoffrey. He lacked, she thought, the serene disposition of the younger brother, and his manner, except when roused, was silent and sunless. Her awe, however, was tinged with admiration for his good looks and his learning, which she and Robert sup-

posed to be without a parallel in New Zealand, if not in the world.

The beauty and naturalness of the young maiden, however, had an instant effect on Geoffrey, dismissing completely the cloud of doubt which had gathered round the idea of the Andersen family, and enabling him to tender his congratulations sincerely and hopefully. For a moment the mother with a possible future and the father with a certain past dropped out of sight.

"If you only knew how nice it is of you to say that," Lena said. "My heart has been sinking lower and lower in anticipation of this interview, and now it is quite easy after all."

"That is the mistake one continually makes," Geoffrey said. "Opposition, if there is to be any, will come, as it always does, from an undreamed-of quarter."

"I wonder where—there is only father left now." Lena looked seriously from one to the other.

"Don't enquire too strenuously of the Fates, and happily they may forget us and pass by on the other side of the way."

Lena led her visitors into the house, where Mrs. Andersen was waiting to receive them. The children had been smuggled out of the way, and except for a suppressed giggling in an inner room, an unusual peace reigned throughout the establishment.

Mrs. Andersen, with a closer acquaintance with the facts than her daughter, had also had her doubts of Geoffrey, and his attitude in the matter consequently brought her great relief. The whole responsibility for the affair rested, as she knew, on her own shoulders. But for the almost criminal neglect she had shown as to the girl's actions, the engagement of Robert and Lena would probably not have come about so speedily, if at all.

"Of course, you think it quite wrong of me to let things come to this pass," she said, when Robert and Lena had disappeared to discuss their new happiness.

"Probably it was not preventible," Geoffrey replied.

"But they are such children."

"In years, no doubt; but Robert has a very wise head on his young shoulders, and Lena, unless her looks belie her, is a young lady of some intelligence."

"She is no fool," the mother conceded. "So you are not put out about it? I was fearing you would be. Robert, of course, might have done better, but she is a good girl—a real good girl."

"Robert might very easily have done much worse."

"But the trouble is they are in such a hurry. They want to get married at once—to-morrow if they could; and how they are going to live I don't know. I know what it is when there is no money in the house."

"So far as that goes Robert is quite able to keep a wife," Geoffrey said thoughtfully.

The door of the room whence the giggling proceeded had been opening and closing narrowly at rapid intervals, and on each occasion there had been a row of round blue eyes, one above the other, fixed with varied expression, ranging from horror at the bottom to mere curiosity at the top, on the visitor who had come in connection with that mysterious affair, Lena's marriage. Now, as Geoffrey ceased speaking, the door suddenly opened wide; there was a whisper, a giggle, a rush, and with a wild hoop the Andersens scattered across the sunlit paddock. Geoffrey looked after them and his original misgivings returned. Was it possible that in taking Lena, Robert was burdening himself with the support of the whole

family, not omitting the mother? And if it were not so, what, in the alternative, was to become of them?

Whether or no Mrs. Andersen guessed what was passing through her visitor's mind, her next remark fell appositely on Geoffrey's thoughts.

"One thing," she said, not without a taint of bitterness, "Lena has never been accustomed to extravagant living, and after what she has had to put up with for years, it won't take a deal to make her happy as the day is long. And Robert needn't be afraid that the rest of us will trouble him—not that he's likely to worry, for he's a dear, good-hearted boy, but we're not coming on him to keep us. And so, when you think it over, you can just reckon on their two selves and nobody else."

"I suppose her father is not likely to raise any objection?" Geoffrey asked, his mind considerably relieved.

"Andersen will do as he is told. It's not for the like of him to come raising objections if the rest of us are satisfied."

"I think it possible Robert may be able to do a little to help you all by-and-by," Geoffrey said cautiously. "But I quite agree with you as to giving them a fair start without encumbrances. In fact, that does seem to me very important, so much so that should anything occur to,—to render you in need of assistance, I hope you will let me hear of it instead of Robert."

"Nothing will occur," said Mrs. Andersen evasively. "We're past all that. Then you are going to let them get married right off?"

"So far as I can be thought to have a voice in the matter," Geoffrey said, "I surrender it freely. They shall please themselves. Robert is at least as capable of weighing the pros and cons as I am."

Meanwhile Robert and Lena had ascended to a ledge on Bald Hill and were sitting overlooking the hollow.

"To think that I have been misjudging Geoffrey all this while," Lena said. "Nothing could be kinder than the way he spoke to me. It made me feel as though I were a princess in disguise and he had found me out."

"Geoff is the best fellow in the world," Robert agreed enthusiastically; "and he behaved just exactly as I told you all along he would behave."

"Did I look nice—a little? I know I blushed and felt like a gawk, but did it show through?"

"Not through the velvet. My, what a beauty! Where did you get it?"

"Mrs. Gird made it for me quite a long time ago. It's real velvet, not common velveteen, and it must have cost a heap of money."

"It's nothing to the dresses I am going to get for you directly, Lena. I've mapped it all out—satins and valencias and that. You'll see."

The valencias puzzled Lena a little, but she was none the less appreciative, and she nestled closer to her lover and slipped her hand into his.

"We are getting closer to it." Robert said solemnly. "This is a big step to-day, and there is only your father to think about now. Are you glad?"

"Are you, Robert?"

"Sometimes I think I've no right to be as glad as this. I ought to wait and give you a chance of some one much better than I am."

"I don't want him," said Lena.

"I wouldn't have him if it were ever so—the disagreeable, stuck-up thing! We are such dear friends, Robert—such kind companions—and you can talk calmly of some one coming in between to part us. I wonder at you!"

"It's only my great happiness, Lena. It makes me suspicious somehow. It's like that chap we read of who found a big diamond and dared not even pick it up to look at it for fear some one would grab it or it would melt away."

"How strange! I have felt like that ever since—that first day. And I thought you were so practical and unimaginative."

"You see I could be hit here," Robert said wisely. "I could be hit hard, and I know I should take it badly; so it makes a man disguise his true feelings a little and keep his eyes open more than ordinary."

Lena laughed softly. "But it's all true," she said. "We take pain to our hearts as a matter of course, but we walk round happiness with suspicion."

"So, Lena, we will not tempt Fate longer than we need and—is there any reason why we should not get married almost at once?"

"And yet there are people who say that this young man is not as

clever as his brother," Lena said, patting his hand.

"And what do you say?"

"I say as you say," said Lena, springing to her feet. "There goes Geoffrey. Let us run down and say good-bye to our brother."

Geoffrey, seeing their approach, reined in his horse at the slip-rail.

"Good-bye, Geoff, and good luck," said the younger brother.

"Mrs. Andersen and I have been discussing your prospects, young people," Geoffrey said, looking from one to the other; "and we are agreed that there are no clouds of any importance in the—"

Geoffrey was interrupted by a horseman who came suddenly up out of the bush, raised his hat to the group at the slip-rail, and set his horse at the hill.

A complete silence attended his advent and succeeded his departure. Geoffrey's sentence remained uncompleted. It was as though a cold blight had fallen on the happy group.

The man was Beckwith.

(To be continued.)

BRITISH SEAMEN FOR BRITISH SHIPS.

THE anniversary of Trafalgar last October was signalised among other things by the return of Admiral Sir John Fisher to the Admiralty Board at Whitehall. Great things are expected of this sterling sailor; but no First Sea Lord, however experienced and capable, can permanently make good the defects in our naval defences except he be intelligently backed up by the Parliamentary machine. Therefore, if our hope of reform is to be realised, we must have legislative action running concurrently with administrative effort.

The first thing to be insisted upon is the one-ness of our Sea Services,—the Royal Navy, which we maintain for national defence, and the Mercantile Marine, the “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” by whose ceaseless ministrations we live. It is passing strange that it should be necessary to speak thus in connection with the World’s greatest Sea-power, but it is indisputably true, whatever cause we may assign for it, that these two great divisions of a service that is one in essence, in interdependence, have been allowed to drift perilously near to severance; until, except in the minds of a few, they have come to be regarded as separate entities. The sole link which binds the merchant navy to the fighting navy is the Royal Naval Reserve. But how slender a link this is! Our naval reserves to-day number about 35,000 and of these not one-third are efficient seamen and actively employed in our Mercantile Marine. In 1859 a Royal Commission recommended a reserve of 38,000. The actual ratings

of the Royal Navy at that date totalled 73,000; at present they number about 131,000, so that on the basis of that recommendation we ought to have a reserve of at least 68,000. But the map of the world and the conditions of naval warfare have changed very much since 1859, and keeping in mind the naval activities of our neighbours,—France has a reserve of 100,000 and Germany of 74,000—we ought most strenuously to strive to raise the total of our naval reserves to at least 100,000. The *personnel* of the Royal Navy has probably touched high-water mark numerically. The general attitude towards the Naval Estimates in recent years lends confirmation to this view. At any rate, at the present rate of increase of 4,000 per annum we must very soon reach that point, if we have not already reached it, beyond which the British taxpayer cannot be expected to go in regard to the number of men kept continually employed in the Royal Navy in time of peace. Therefore, in order to provide the large and efficient reserve which is essential to our national safety, and at the same time avoid heavy expenditure in the maintenance of a larger force of active ratings than is necessary, every effort must be made to train a sufficient number of boys and find employment for them in the ships of the Mercantile Marine. Theoretically, our Merchant Navy from its *personnel* of 258,000 should yield us the requisite number of reserves on demand, but unfortunately the British Merchant Navy is to an alarming extent British

only as regards its material. At the present time there are nearly 40,000 foreigners sailing under the Red Ensign, and statistics show us that the foreign element is still increasing. Year by year the number of British seamen grows less, and unless the decline is speedily arrested we must ere long see the passing of the last of British seamen from British ships. This sad story is not new; indeed it has not a new feature for since the repeal of the Navigation Laws and the removal of all restrictions as to the manning of British Merchant Vessels (1849-53) the decline of the native and the ascendancy of the alien has been absolutely uninterrupted. Possibly the steady flow of the foreign element has been somewhat checked by the operation of the Act of 1898 under which ship-owners have been induced to carry a certain number of boys in consideration of a given allowance from Parliament in proportion to the amount paid in Light Dues. Mr. Ritchie's scheme, however, reaches its time limit on March the 31st next, and, so far as we now know, from that date even this small palliative will cease to operate. We then have to attack the problem almost *de novo*.

By far the larger number of foreigners enter our Merchant Service just at the age when those of our own race and blood leave it in disgust at the conditions under which they have to live and work. Young and imperfectly trained they come to us,—Scandinavians, Germans, Southern Frenchmen, Italians, and even Turks and Greeks—and in our ships gain that experience which distinguishes the true sailor from the mere deck-hand. We are, in fact, training seamen for foreign Powers. In the event of an outbreak of war with a Continental Power we may not unreasonably assume that history would

repeat itself and that we should have to face a combination of two or more naval forces which, grand as is our sea-power, would try us to the utmost. It would be at that precise moment that these 40,000 aliens would be withdrawn from our service, many of them to swell the crews of hostile fleets. In the moment of our greatest need not only should we be denied the assistance of the Merchant Navy in making good the inevitable wastages of war, but the country would be unable properly to continue the great food-carrying and other over-sea commercial services on which it is so entirely dependent.

Lord Charles Beresford, in a recent letter most truly said: "The Empire depends for its existence on the gallantry, readiness of resource, and indomitable energy of the Mercantile Marine, who, under all conditions of difficulty and stress of weather, ensure the punctual delivery of our food and raw material." That statement I would supplement by saying: "The guarantee that our Mercantile Marine will justify our reliance upon it and fulfil its every obligation in time of greatest need is proportionate to the extent in which British ships are manned by British seamen."

In the above observations no account has been taken of Lascars, because, in the first place, they have some claim to serve with us, and, in the second place, climatic conditions cannot be over-ridden, and the exigencies of navigation in Eastern seas are such as to render the employment of these men, who are inured to tropical heat, almost unavoidable.

The dearth of British seamen and the manning of British vessels by so large a proportion of foreigners having the double significance shown above, how may we hope to increase the one and displace the other? The reported preference of ship-masters

for foreigners on account of the dis-soluteness and intractability of the Briton may be dismissed as mere uninformed and idle talk. The difficulty of securing a sufficient supply of well-trained boys, it has been contended, has been mainly instrumental in letting in the foreigner. To a limited extent this is true, but too much stress has been laid on this one presentation of the case. Foreigners do not come to us as boys, but as ordinary seamen, or as ordinary seamen for the first time claiming the rating of A.B. Under Mr. Ritchie's scheme perhaps 1,000 boys have taken up the profession of the sea yearly, but not more than one-quarter of these have remained in the service more than a year or two. And the same remark applies to large numbers of the boys sent out from the various training-ships. There is an undoubted necessity for the training of more boys, and the better training of them, but the need of the moment is improvement in the conditions of life and service in the Mercantile Marine to an extent that those upon whose training time and money have been expended may be induced to stay on when their services have become valuable. Until this can be achieved those who now devote themselves exclusively to securing lads for the profession will experience the perpetual disappointment of seeing both funds and energies wasted. The displacement of the alien and the manning of British ships by British seamen can only be accomplished by making life in the Mercantile Marine as supportable as in some of the commoner callings on shore. At present it is very far from being so. Lord Brassey in a recent article says, in reference to the dearth of British seamen, "The falling numbers are due to scanty wages." There can be no doubt that in the past low wages

have operated powerfully to drive Britons out of the sea-service, but accommodation and dietary are also factors in the case, and both still require improvement.

A powerful factor in promoting the return of the Briton would be a liberal scheme of Old Age Pensions. The Royal Commission of 1859 strongly recommended such provision on the ground that "in proportion as the fund became more general the Merchant Service would be more and more closely attached to and united with our system of maritime defence." It is this closer union of the two branches of our sea-services which is so greatly to be desired. As the direct result of it would be efficiency with economy, no means to its accomplishment should be left untried. Moreover the registers of the Pension Fund would meet another need; they would afford all necessary information as to the whereabouts of British seamen the world over, and in certain circumstances it might be that this information would prove invaluable.

A thing to be desired above all others, perhaps, is facilities for continuous service. Under present conditions the merchant seaman on being paid off spends a more or less eventful time ashore with such acquaintances as he can make, until his diminishing funds warn him of the need of again seeking employment. Then begins a weary round of the docks and shipping-offices, and as a general rule a part of his earnings on his next voyage is already anticipated before he is again at sea. Such a condition of things wars continually against the moral and physical welfare of our seamen. Therefore, every inducement should be held out to ship-owners and to seamen mutually to enter into time-agreements for periods of service other

than a specific voyage. It is unnecessary to point out how much the *personnel* of the Royal Navy has improved since the men have been enrolled for a specific term of years instead of merely for the length of a ship's commission. The men have adopted the sea as their profession for life, and consequently take a pride in making themselves as efficient as possible. We may not unreasonably assume that a somewhat similar improvement would result in the *personnel* of the Merchant Navy if a scheme of time agreements were put in force, and the more so that in return for the facilities granted by ship-owners seamen might well be required to prove by continuous-service certificates their qualifications for the rating to which they lay claim.

The means by which these things should be accomplished must be left to Parliament to decide. We know that only by State interference can we secure the very thorough reform desired; and the natural corollary of State interference is State aid. Further legislation, then, is necessary. There is, it is said, a reluctance to put ship-owners under anything like compulsion, but the Statute Book bears witness to the fact that the State regulation of trades and callings has long been admitted in principle and in fact, both afloat and ashore. The probability is that any fresh legislation, while being of general advantage to the country, would be of peculiar benefit to the ship-owners, of whom it is said at present that they "receive no favours from the State."

A favourable opportunity for dealing with the question will occur when the Light Dues again come before Parliament, as they must do in the next session. On every hand it seems desirable that these dues

should be abolished altogether, and that the cost of maintaining the necessary lights on our coasts be defrayed out of the State revenues as is the case in the United States and in Germany. It is true that under the Act of 1898 the Light Dues can now be used only for the purposes for which they were originally levied; but ship-owners still feel most strongly that these dues are an unjust and mischievous tax on the shipping industry, and, indeed, they may justly be so regarded seeing the immunity from special taxation enjoyed by other branches of commerce. The Light Dues abolished, the State will be in so much the better position to impose the necessary reforms upon the Mercantile Marine, and ship-owners in a better position to concede them. The abolition of the Light Dues would, of course, permanently put a period to Mr. Ritchie's scheme for the training of boys in the Mercantile Marine for the Royal Naval Reserve, but it is undesirable that this scheme should be further proceeded with in any event. It is most unfortunate that this question of the training of boys should ever have been associated with so controversial a matter as the Light Dues; but apart from that, the scale of allowances in practice works out so unequally, and is so disadvantageous to owners of sailing-ships, in which alone boys can be trained as they ought to be trained, that the scheme can never have the effect its author hoped for it. The money expended under it has resulted in a minimum of practical good to the nation, and at the same time has in no wise satisfied the demands of the ship-owners.

What is to take the place of this scheme? The mere remission of taxation, important as it is, will not meet the case, and experience sug-

gests some form of State subsidies such as is enjoyed by the shipping of other nations. It may be impolitic, if not absolutely impracticable, to attempt to compel ship-owners to man their ships exclusively with British seamen, but Parliament should be asked to adopt some scheme under which it should be to the pecuniary advantage of the owners to do so. There can be no doubt that the British ship-owner is right in his contention that he should no more be compelled to find reserves for the Navy than, say, the agriculturist should be under obligation to find reserves for the Army. Nevertheless, it is expedient on grounds of national economy and public safety that he should very materially assist in so doing. It is imperative for the national safety that we have a strong naval reserve and as the cost to the State of the reserves is only about one-tenth that of the permanent naval force it is easily seen that it will also be to our financial advantage. If then we abolish the irritating Light Dues and secure in return such improvements in the conditions of service in the Merchant Navy as will induce our young men to remain in it as qualified men of the Royal Naval Reserve, we shall render unnecessary a continually increasing expenditure on the manning vote for the Royal Navy, and yet have a margin of funds available for allocation in subsidies or bounties to ship-owners in consideration of their carrying a certain number of boys in each of their ships. Moreover we shall have again linked up the Merchant Service with the Fighting Navy in a way all true patriots will approve and desire. Lord Brassey, in a kind of apology for the meagreness of the Naval Estimates under certain heads, said, "We must make both ends meet." A policy on the lines indi-

cated above gives promise of achieving that most sensible object, and at the same time of satisfying the not less peremptory demand for a thoroughly efficient First Line of Defence. Bounties and subsidies, perhaps, to some extent run counter to the national grain, but it must be made clear that this is only a change, and a change for the better, in our methods of national book-keeping. For the moment I take no account of the great benefit ship-owners would reap in more efficient services from the men they employ, nor of the fact, of which many appear to have completely lost sight, that a new industrial outlet would have been opened for a not inconsiderable proportion of our male population. There is no doubt even that we might go a step farther in making our Royal Naval Reserve itself more attractive to young seamen, and still have money in hand when future comparisons came to be made on the basis of the present rate of expenditure on the *personnel* of the Royal Navy. Particularly does this remark apply to young officers. But the pressing need of the moment is men, and to meet it all our public and private energies, all the legislative resources of the nation, ought to be called into play.

It is recognised on all hands that, commercially speaking, the raw boy is a bad bargain for ship-owners and ship-masters. His cost for food is not less than that of the properly qualified seaman, and taking into account the services he is able to give in return for the outlay upon him in food, accommodation, and wages it must be admitted that he cannot give value for money. A year's instruction in the rudiments of his craft in a training-ship, and especially where the stationary or depôt-ship has a sea-going tender as part of its equipment, makes all the

difference in the world. The attitude of ship-masters is at once entirely changed, and statistics prove that there are openings for a greater number of these trained boys, incomplete though their training be, than can be supplied with the existing machinery. It is not that there is any lack of boys willing to enter the sea-service, but that the accommodation on the training-ships is insufficient. Practically we have but four training-ships by means of which poor boys of good character can get the necessary opening to a career in the Merchant Service, and these through lack of funds are unable to work at their full capacity. The Marine Society's ship *WARSPITE* on the Thames is a case in point. With accommodation for three hundred boys only about one hundred and eighty can be taken on account of the limited amount of the public subscriptions by which it is maintained. It is a curious commentary on our national methods that while not one of the four training-ships for poor boys of good character is in receipt of State aid, the numerous industrial and reformatory ships on the Thames and elsewhere on our coasts in almost every case receive both State aid and rate aid, in addition to subscriptions from the benevolent public. The position then is this, that while there are many well-supported training-depôts for what are only too often recruits of the wrong kind,—boys of bad antecedents, indifferent character, and poor physique—practically no effort is made to secure and train the right sort of recruits,—boys of poor but respectable parentage, of blameless character, and of robust physique.

The facts must be borne in mind when Mr. Ritchie's scheme again

comes before Parliament, and stress must be laid upon the fact that a very large percentage of the lads expensively maintained in the mis-called training-ships,—the State-aided and rate-aided Industrial and Reformatory Depôts—never go to sea at all.

Various schemes have been proposed for remedying the unsatisfactory state of things briefly described here. Probably no one scheme has a monopoly of merit. It seems tolerably clear, however, that the State should without delay provide the means of training for the Mercantile Marine the thousands of boys of the right stamp which our inland as well as sea-board towns are only too anxious to supply. As a first step it will no doubt be wise to make every possible use of and improvement in existing machinery, somewhat on the principle underlying the recent action with regard to the voluntary schools of the country, supplementing private subscriptions by wisely considered grants for maintenance and providing sea-going tenders to every stationary training-ship or depôt. Private enterprise is, I believe, soon to make a further attempt to establish a thoroughly well-equipped ocean-going training-ship or ships. It should be a matter of careful consideration for our Government as to whether or not such ship or ships should not be recognised and assisted by a substantial grant. Foreign nations, whose maritime power is insignificant in comparison with ours, have long ago realised the importance of the ocean-going training-ship both to national defence and commercial supremacy, and it is time the Mistress of the Seas, if doing no more, at least fell into line with these.

WULFF RICE.

THE PROFESSION OF ART.

THE position of the artist in relation to his work, and especially to his daily work, is in some respects not easy to define. Are we to look upon art as a vocation, or merely as a means of subsistence? And can it be both at once?

We call it a profession, but that is by courtesy only; it has no clear claim to the title. When you come to think of it, the very name of artist is not one which a man, whatever the nature of his pursuit, can with entire modesty arrogate to himself. Any right he may have to it depends upon his performance, and that is for others to appreciate. He may be himself the best judge of his work; but he is not an impartial one.

To its loyal servant art is something more than a profession. It is the beginning of all his hopes and, if not the end of all his efforts, the chosen means to that end. It is the outlet of his admiration, and thus akin to worship. In fact, it is a religion to him, or comes very near to being one, and is no more a thing to boast of than the faith that is in him. Craftsmen will always be eager enough to discuss the technique, and perhaps the theory, of what used to be called their trade: they may be justified in boasting proficiency in it; but, just as good men do not claim to be devout or honest, so an artist should hesitate to assume a title, the warrant to which is, not that he paints or models, designs or writes, acts or composes, but that, in doing one or other of these things, he gives proof of a certain quality.

There is about all claim to artistry, as about the assumption of righteousness, a savour of cant. Methinks the artist doth protest too much!

However, men do claim to be artists. They go sometimes so far as to esteem themselves such artists that it is too much to ask of them that they should earn their own living, and to imagine that the endeavour to do so would amount on their part to nothing less than abdicating the prerogative of their high calling. What an artist has to do, they urge, is to give expression to himself, and to encourage the mood favourable to artistic utterance. As to his maintenance (and that of his family) it is the affair of the world at large, and, far from begrudging him largess, it ought to thank heaven for the privilege of ministering to his wants. This is an argument none the less grotesque because there may be now and again a genius deserving of such grateful consideration. In any case, it lies with genius to make good its claim to exemption from the common lot. And in the meanwhile, pending proof, how is the man to live? It comes, then, in almost every case, to his supporting himself, if only for a while. The question is,—how?

The devotion of the artist to his art may be taken for granted. Without it he were hardly an artist. Being one, he will not hesitate to sacrifice for it much that men care for. He cares more for his art. But will sacrifice always avail, will his devotion keep him? That is the doubt which presses like a nightmare

upon the mind of many an artist conscious not only of the claims of his calling but of his responsibilities as a man. It may be questioned, by the way, whether, even in the case where it is possible for genius to live by the exercise of its function (as a priest by his office) performance is not apt to become, by constant and ordained repetition, more and more perfunctory, less and less deserving the respect and homage due, and gladly paid, to inspiration. Art worthy of the pinnacle on which men seem agreed to place it, is the exceptional work of exceptional men. It is only at intervals between work more prosaic that genius itself reaches its full height. There may be mastery in all an artist does; but masterpieces, even by the most prolific, are occasional. It is only by a polite fiction that everything an artist does deserves to be called art. Or, if we expand the term to include his everyday work, then art is vastly overrated. Great works of art are children of the imagination, begotten only in the happy moment, brought forth only in the fulness of time. The action of the creative faculty is by no means perpetual: production leads to exhaustion; and the natural limits to artistic, as to human, paternity are soon reached. Art, it has been said, is man's nature; but the constant pursuit of art, and of art exclusively, is, if not contrary to nature, a strain upon it hardly to be borne. It is open to doubt whether it might not be in every way better if the exceptional artist, who appeals, and must in the nature of things always appeal, to the few, were to support himself by some simple handicraft (in which there would still be scope for art) and give vent to his genius only when the fit was on him. That would not be every day. What, then, becomes of art as a means of livelihood?

In the case of the artist eager to put into words or sounds what everybody wants to hear, to express in form or colour what all are anxious to see, things run smoothly enough. But in the more likely case of a man burning to deliver a message the world is not yet conscious of wanting,—what is he, poor man, to do? We are all agreed that he is bound in duty not to degrade his art; the difference of opinion is as to what is art, and in what consists its degradation.

However we may define art, practically it may be taken as that something over and above workmanship which an artist puts into his work because he is an artist; the man must be a workman first before ever he can express himself in the terms of art. And just as every artist is a workman, every workman is a possible artist; starting, that is to say, as a mere journeyman ready to do what comes to his hand, he may push handicraft to the point of art. Moreover, beginning at that end, he is at least as likely to reach the top of the artistic capacity as the man who prefers to bask in self-indulgence until such time as the spirit of art shall move him to a more active form of the same pleasure. A workman is none the less an artist that the ardour of his activity urges him to continual doing. There is little in the nature of handwork in which he may not find the satisfaction of artistic expression; but it is by his craftsmanship, rather than by the art which he puts into it, that any but the few favourites of fortune can hope directly to earn a living.

In any high interpretation of its meaning, art is not precisely a marketable quality. That something over and above craftsmanship, as I have already said, which the artist puts into his work for art's sake, because without that much of self-expression

his work would be no satisfaction to him, may in the end bring money ; but no money will buy it. It is only in the sense in which the word is used by the man in the shop, that art is saleable ; something which gives an added value to his wares, something for which he can charge extra, and for which therefore he is prepared to pay more or less, according to his insight and to the liberality or meanness of his policy.

And this applies in great measure not only to what are called Arts and Crafts but to what is entitled Fine Art. The portrait to bring commissions is the one which flatters the sitter or his friends ; the selling picture the one which fixes some favourite effect or scene, which chronicles an event or tells a story ; it is not commonly bought for the elusive quality which artists see in it, any more than a popular novel commands its wide circulation by right of literary style. It is not so much art as the thing upon which art has been expended that has a market. Genius itself is at most grudgingly paid for, until the artist has made a name for himself, by which time his troubles as to ways and means of living are at an end. To those, however, who have to earn their living, to the great majority that is to say, and practically speaking to all at the beginning of their career, the question pressing for constant answer is,—are they in expediency or in honesty bound to bring their ideal of art down to the market level ? No man who is an artist will answer that in the affirmative. And, from the merely practical point of view, the worst policy he could adopt would be to do less than his best. He need have no scruple, however, about giving up the idea of doing only just what he likes. Where is the glory to a man in gratifying his own desires ? Our sympathy with the sacrifices he

may make for his art does not extend to those he offers up at the shrine of his own vanity. It is well to be careful of the pure artistic impulse, but not to coddle or pamper it. The very discipline of doing something it is not merely a pleasure but a duty to do, strengthens a man in his art ; and he will show the artist he is, by doing it better than was stipulated in the bond.

That the compulsion of circumstances is not wholly to the disadvantage of art is proved by the confession of many an artist ere now (Thackeray was one of them) that, but for the prick of necessity, they would have lacked incentive to do the work which brought them fame. How often is it that an artist makes use of the leisure secured to him by an assured and unearned income ? A man of means may do what he likes, but as a rule we see in it that he had not to work hard,—and did not.

Amateurs have no occasion to scorn the man who has to work for bread, when they themselves are not above making money, if they can get it without going out of their way. Careful consideration of the pecuniary side of the question, which might possibly be mean in one man, is the plain duty of another. Naturally there is some danger of anyone who works (as many must) for money becoming a mere trade worker ; but there is also a danger on the other side. A man who has no need to think of anything but the leisurely perfection of his work gets to think too much about it, and dwindles into a sort of dilettante. It is almost as bad to dawdle through one's daily pleasure as to be driven to perfunctory reproduction. This is not sufficiently taken into account by those who maintain that art ought to be subsidised. Nor do they realise that, under such conditions, for here

and there a genius enabled by endowment to perfect itself, a whole crop of ineffectives would spring up. It is easy to say of any artist who meets his liabilities like a man, that he is "prostituting his genius"; and the accusation comes too fluently to the lips of those who never knew what it was to want. Southey was thus blamed by his friends, who cited against him the example of Wordsworth, as one too deeply absorbed in his art to do anything less lofty than write verse; and his answer is unanswerable. Reputation, he explained, had not brought affluence to him; he was obliged to earn his living, and "the most gainful way" in which he could employ himself was by writing for *THE QUARTERLY REVIEW*. "At this therefore," he said, "I work as a duty, at other things by inclination. Wordsworth has a regular income adequate to his support, and therefore may do as he likes." That same adequate income is the envy of the impecunious; but it is not so entirely a blessing as, in our poverty, we take it to be. Possibly Wordsworth himself might, had he come under the influence of a capable and exacting editor, have lifted up the work of his dull moments, without in any way impairing his poetic genius. As it was he only sometimes reached his own high level of inspiration.

Not even great gifts of imagination, though they mark out for their possessor the course to pursue, make him free to follow his inclination always. There is the further consideration of duty which occurs, or, to so many votaries of art, does not seem to occur. Duty to their art they will admit, but there they seem to think it ends; genius exempts them,—though, as it happens, men of the transcendent genius which might conceivably warrant such an

assumption do not make it. If a man will repudiate his obligations the odds are all against its being worth the world's while to relieve him of them. We meet in a generation a few painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, and others who have claims upon our lenient consideration. Would-be geniuses are as common as Skimpoles.

Genius or not, an artist is first of all a man. If he is an honest one he pays his way; if he has any spirit he will be beholden to none but himself. The idea that there is derogation in accepting the conditions under which we live, and in particular the necessity of self-support, argues a curious perversion of mind. And the impractical attitude becomes in the end rather ridiculous. Really artists take themselves too seriously. Not that there is any harm in a man's overestimating the value of the work he has to do. A painter may think too much of painting, a sculptor of modelling, a poet of verse, and do all the better for some illusion on the subject. The great presumption of anyone is to value himself, or what he personally does, at more than its market price.

It has happened before now that an artist's true success has been in something upon which he did not pride himself. The work he is known by, or which survives without our knowing whose it is (it does not much matter) is by no means always the mighty effort by which he bid for fame. It may have been a simple piece of journey-work. Poems written for posterity may linger all but dead upon the shelves of the library, while the same author's hack-work lives to remind one there was ever such a poet. Southey's *LIFE OF NELSON*, the mere expansion of a review done to the publisher's order, is a case in point. Or, to take the name of a

man about whom there is no dispute, Shakespeare; it was not by his sonnets, on which he set such store, that the world was taken captive, but by the plays he wrote more or less in the way of business. But then, of course, he did his very best, though it may have been to keep the theatre going that he set to work upon a play.

There is something to be said for the very pot-boiler. It is a thing to be ashamed of only because men are so little true to any high ideal of art as to reserve their best for the work they best like doing, and to be content with very much less than that to keep the pot a-boiling. The mistake is in supposing that an artist can ever afford to do less than his best, whatever it is he undertakes. The normal and healthy state of things is to work under practical conditions. To chafe at them, even though they be restrictions of trade, is certainly no sign of strength. Some at least of the art we could ill spare was done under such restrictions; and if to-day conditions of trade are more servile than once they were, the fault lies partly with artists who will have nothing to do with it. It is no fault of industry if artists decline to co-operate with it, and compel the producers of things which should be beautiful to fall back upon workmen who may be something short of artists, but whose self-esteem has not outgrown their skill. Since Arts and Crafts came into fashion, the self-esteem of a craftsman is becoming as hard to satisfy as though he were an actor-manager, round whom, not the limelight merely, but the whole world is expected to revolve. Foolish as the world may be, it is not so innocent as to take every *poseur* at his own price.

Let us acknowledge that it is something of a luxury to follow the

vocation of art. The luxury has to be paid for,—and by the artist himself—much as he might prefer to shift the responsibility of payment upon other shoulders. The only question is, in what form payment should be made. An artist gives forth what it is in him to give, and in the way it comes to him to give it; a manufacturer, mechanic, or trade-worker produces what people want, and as they want it. The one is possessed by a desire to give, the other by a determination to get. The one creates, the other supplies a demand. That implies two very different kinds of men. But if the man of imagination is not quite like others, neither is the man of learning or of law, of science, or of any calling which makes claims upon invention. Each order of persons is responsible after its kind, each individual after his personality; but we are all alike responsible, and the doctrine of artistic immunity from responsibility common to all is in the end as deadly to a man's art as it is degrading to his manhood.

The root of the error is in the supposition that, because it is essential to art that the artist should take pleasure in his work, therefore his whole duty is to please himself. His justification, when he insists on following his own bent, is, not that it pleases him to do just so, but that he is best employed upon what he likes; that the best work is possible only when it is congenial, when the worker delights in it. Delight in the thing he is about is, no doubt, essential to its well doing, and the pleasure he takes in it is a sort of sign to him that all is going right; but what are we to think of a workman who does not get interested in the thing to which he has once set his hand, even against his inclinations? It is in the artistic nature to get deeply, even enthusiastically engrossed

in the problem to be solved. Still one may think that in doing his own special work he is giving the world his best. "No profit goes where is no pleasure ta'en." That is the excuse for doing what we "most affect."

A stubborn independence is part of the artist's equipment. The point at which independence oversteps the mark is where a man begins to fret under the mildest and most necessary control, and will listen to no manner of prompting. Such an attitude of mind unfits him for all practical work. If he has a living to earn he is a subject for commiseration; but the really pitiable thing about the unfortunate artist is that he thinks himself to be pitied because he is expected to do something which is not precisely what he would prefer to do. Is genius so paramount with him that it will make no concession whatsoever? Then the sooner he ceases to look to it for support the better for him. It is of no use clipping the wings of Pegasus, and he makes at best a poor draught-horse; the artist's better plan is to pull the cart himself. To look outside one's own energies for help, is to show lack of that virility which stands to us for the creative faculty.

No workman is afraid of soiling his hands. And, the artist being primarily a workman, what is there in reason to prevent his accepting that position as his starting point? It allows him, and enables him, to earn a living. Naturally he would choose the trade which, while it afforded the means of support, gave scope for artistic expression. It would be hard if it did not also earn him leisure ample for the expression of all he really is inspired to say or do. With the most impassioned of us the state of inspiration is not normal; and, since for the greater part of a man's time he

is hardly fit for more than honest workmanship, what, in the name of reason, is there to prevent him working for his bread? There is nothing in the best journey-work to tarnish that idea of perfect self-expression which it is the artist's special care to keep bright. It is a means, in fact, of exercising the faculties necessary to the full expression of those happy thoughts with which not many of us are overburdened. Many a painter owes to journey-work in black and white his facility of composition; many an essayist owes to practice in journalism the crispness of his style. It is said that men are ruined by such work and never rise above it. If that be so, it is because they were not meant by nature for great artists. If all artists had a trade to live by, we should not hear much about "the insanity of genius." Or is it begging the question, to ask that genius should first of all be sane?

It can hardly be said that sanity is the strong point of men to whom art is at the same time a sort of pastime and sole source of income, who flout the Philistine, and ask him in return to play providence to them. As though there were the faintest reason why any particular class of persons should be privileged merely to enjoy themselves! The claim of the artist upon the rest of the world stands entirely upon the supposition of its wanting his work. Happily, some of us like doing what others want to be done, and would do it for the fun of it, though no one asked us to do it. It is upon a sufficient demand for the product of our pleasurable activity that all hope of payment must depend. The fortunate few whose delight is to do the thing for which there is demand enough to ensure them more than their bare living wage, scarcely affect the balance of ordinary conditions, which decree that men bent

upon a pleasurable pursuit have to consider it in relation to their livelihood. It is not with the artist a blunt question between art and money,—in serving mammon he gives up all high hope of art—but he finds himself at a point where he has to reconcile apparently conflicting duties, or to choose between them. A man must adjust either his life to his art or his art to his way of living. He must adopt a scale of living rendered possible by the exercise of his art, or a form of art which will provide him with the means of living as he likes. There can be no question as to which is the more promising, and which the more dangerous course.

Nothing short of experience can tell how far the current of popular taste is with a man. He should know best how far he dare go against it; front it he surely will, if he is not of those dead fishes which float always with the stream. None but a weak personality will easily be driven by trade or seduced by fashion, though a sensitive temperament will not be quite unresponsive to the deeper chords of popular feeling. The direction of his endeavour, and the limits of his persistence in it, are things a man must decide for himself, or possibly it is his temper which will determine such points for him. The circumstance of circumstances most nearly affecting (together with his temperament) the direction of an artist's energies is, commonly, the necessity of bread and cheese. Impulse urges perhaps in one direction, necessity pulls in another. Which is one to follow? Is compromise possible? Is it abject, or heroic, to make the best of it?

Let us not put reasonableness quite out of court. Though the aim of art is not to make money, it may do so by the way; and, soberly considered, it is a finer thing to make your art support you than to take up a

position which makes self-support impossible. The little, it must be remembered, that an artist wants, or ought to want, should not be so difficult to earn; he has not, like the man whose work is drudgery, to provide for pleasures; he gets them out of his work. His art, in fact, is just what he puts into it for the pride and pleasure of doing, not what he does for gain. As to fame, which may come of it, that too is no such noble pursuit. The hunger for it amounts only to a bigger sort of vanity; and the straining after it loosens the fibre of an artist's manhood. The boast of art is, when all is said, only boasting. And then how short a step it is from vaunting the loftiness of art and its remoteness from trade to making capital out of belonging to a profession so dignified. It will not be said that the step has never been taken, or that there is no element of business in the artistic outcry against commercial production. When artists say in effect: "All that manufacturers make and tradesmen sell is rubbish; it is their concern to make badly and to sell cheaply; the genuine thing is what we only supply,"—there may be truth in it; but it is not very easy to see in what their pleading differs from the cry of the shopman, "Buy, buy, buy!" They are calling attention to the other shop, it is true; but, little doubt as there may be as to which gives best value for the money, both parties are in effect advertising the wares they have to sell.

The practice of art is one long series of adventures in an undiscovered country, for the experience of others avails very little. Of all the beaten tracks a man has to find the one which leads in his direction, and, where that fails, to make his own way. He has to find out what is to be done, what he can do, what

he can do best. There lies his success; but something of it will in any event depend upon his right survey of the situation. It is a hopelessly short-sighted view which does not take in the conditions of the country and the nature of its inhabitants. At times an artist is fortunately free to choose his public, but he is never at liberty to disregard it; and, in addressing even the few, he has to consider, not only what his painting or his sculpture, his writing or his music means to say, but what will possibly be understood by it. It is his business to make himself clear to the community, not theirs to elucidate his meaning. There are, in effect, two parties to the implied contract between the artist and his public; and it will not do to leave one of them out of the account.

If, indeed, there were no third course open to the artist, and he were bound either to ignore his public (which is supposed to be rather a fine thing to do) or to truckle to it (which is certainly not a fine thing to do) it would be hard upon him. But how rarely it is that any one is forced, except by his own vanity in the one case, or his meanness in the other, to adopt one of these dangerous extremes. Plainly the way, though it may swerve a little to this side or to that, lies well between the two. On points of conscience and

of artistic right, every one must hold his own. The light to guide him must come from within. On matters concerning the public he sees fit to address, some concession on the part of the artist should not be impossible; it may be imperative in the interests of his own artistic efficiency. His methods may fall short of their effect; in which case there is nothing for it but to amend or alter them. What is the use of going on, even in one's own way, when it is quite certain that it does not lead to the end in view? The position of artistic superiority to practical considerations is untenable, and the sooner it is given up the better. Its abandonment involves no loss of self-respect; there is nothing very dignified in standing upon dignity.

The upshot of the argument is, that allegiance to art does not absolve a man from his obligations to the community; that by earning his living (whether by his art or by a separate trade) he need in no way impair his faculty; that, though it were thereby impaired, he takes too much for granted in thinking that reason enough for shirking his responsibilities; and that, in short, artist or whatever he may be, his duty is to keep himself and pay his way. When he declines to do so he brings discredit upon the calling he would have us place so high.

LEWIS F. DAY.

MOLE-WARFARE.

I.

At last, after days of work, the excavation has been done. The actual tunnel,—the mine-gallery—is but a replica, life-size, of the mine-chart kept with such precautions and jealous care by the Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers, in his little straw shanty down in the lodgement whence the gallery started. This chart is plotted out on a large-scale parchment map of the fort in front, dog-eared and dirty because it was made by a Japanese Engineer officer, when working, before the war, as a coolie on this very defence work.

Degree for degree, foot for foot, with the help of theodolite, level, and plumb-bob, has the gallery followed its miniature prototype on the greasy parchment. If plumb-bob and measure, level and theodolite have not lied, the desired point underneath the main parapet of Fort —shan has been reached.

The chambers excavated at right angles to contain the explosive were cut, as soon as the main gallery was estimated to have crossed below the deep ditch and to be well beneath the great parapet of the fort, the object to be blown up.

Into these chambers tons and tons of dynamite have been carefully carried and closely packed. The men, who have stood for hours along the gallery, passing the cases from one to the other like water-buckets at a fire, have now trooped out. The means of firing the charge have been put into position and connected. The charge is sealed up by the mass of

rock, shale, and earth which has been placed for some fifty yards back in the gallery as "tamping." This has been done to cork up the mine, so as to prevent the force of the explosion being desperaged down the gallery, as a blank charge in the barrel of a gun. The ceaseless scurry to and fro of the mining trucks has ended,—those little trucks which have run forwards empty and back again full, their badly greased wheels often shrieking a horror-struck protest at their task, and the mole-like miners have come up from underground. After days of burrowing they are now entirely brown, clothes, hands, faces, and hair full of crumbs of soil.

As usual no chances have been taken. As far as possible, in every case, the means of firing the charge have been duplicated. Firstly, there is electricity: for this there are two entirely separate circuits, each connected to its own set of detonators in the charge. To prevent possible damage from clumsy foot or falling stone the wires have been carried in split bamboos along the gallery. The circuits have been tested several times, and each time the little kick of the galvanometer-needle has shown that there was no break in the line. Besides the electricity there is the ordinary fuze, also in duplicate. Each is made up of three different links in the chain of ignition; the detonators in the charge, the length of instantaneous-fuze from them to a point some yards outside the tamping, and lastly the short piece of slow burning safety-fuze joined on,—safety-fuze, in order to allow time for escape to the

person igniting the charge. Weak spots in the train of fire always are these joints, difficult to make, and easily deranged by a jerk or a falling stone. The fuzes, however, are after all only a second string; much neater, cleaner, quicker and more certain is the electric current.

Far away, at varying distances, lie the guns, every one already laid on the doomed fort. Some will fire direct, some from behind hills, whence one cannot see the target.

So soon as the smoke of the explosion shoots up, and mushroom-like spreads into the sky, all will concentrate their fire on this work. A veritable squall of bursting steel and shrapnel bullets will it be, and under its cover the assaulting columns will storm the breach.

The stormers are now ready, crouching under cover in the different lodgements and parallels closest to the work. They are waiting the moment to charge forward on the bewildered and shaken survivors of the explosion, who will be subjected simultaneously to this inferno of artillery fire.

All is ready, but not a moment too soon, for have not the listeners, lying prone in their branch listening-galleries, heard coming from somewhere in the womb of Mother Earth *thud thud*,—the strokes of the Russians countermining? Has not the pebble placed on the many-coloured captured Russian drum danced to the same vibrations? Hard it is to locate, harder still to estimate their distance; but without doubt they are working, working near at hand too. Even now they may have burrowed right up to the charge, and be busy in cutting the electric leads and fuzes. Dynamite, luckily, cannot be drowned out by water.

Far down the hill-side is the lodgement, that hole which looks like a distorted volcanic crater. Such, in

fact, it is, being the result of exploding a few small mines, so spaced that their resulting craters intersect, and by overlapping form one elongated pit, a broad and very deep trench. The soil vomited up by the explosion has formed a parapet all round as it fell back. It was when the attackers found that they could advance no closer over the open, that this pit was made. A tunnel had been made up to its position,—this was the commencement of the mole's work,—and the mines exploded. At once, even while the sky was still raining rocks and clods of earth, the Sappers and Infantry advanced with a cat-like rush from the parallel behind and seized this point of vantage. Without delay they started with pick and shovel to improve on the work of the explosives. Cat-like too, with tooth and nail have they hung on to their newly won position against all counter attacks. In vain have the desperate Russians surpassed themselves in their nightly attempts to try and turn out the Japanese by bayonet, bomb, or bullet. A foothold once established, the men of Nippon have hung on to the spot, steadily strengthening it the while.

From this lodgement was started the gallery for the great mine that is just about to be exploded and is to give them a road into the fortress, and it is here that all interest is now centred.

Down at the bottom of the hollow is a small group intently waiting. At the telephone in the straw shanty kneels the operator. Over the top of the parapet, above which bullets and shells sing their way, peers the Lieutenant-Colonel. Close by, in charge of a heavily-built Sergeant, lies a curious innocent-looking box with a handle; it is the dynamo-exploder. Near it two men are standing, each holding one end of an

electric wire in either hand. The ends of these wires, where the metal protruding from its black insulation is scraped bright, give four points of light in the picture.

The telephone orderly speaks; the Colonel gives an order. Quickly and silently the two ends of wire held by one man are placed in the clamps of the dynamo, which are screwed down to grip them. The moment is fateful, and dead silence reigns among the little group, whose drawn and dirty faces wear if possible a more anxious expression than usual. The orderly speaks again. The Colonel turns to the Sergeant,—“Fire!”

Prrr—t,—the Sergeant throws his whole weight on the handle, forcing it down with a purring rattle, while all involuntarily cower down, holding their breath. . . .

Nothing happens!

Again,—once more is the handle jerked up and forced down. Nothing happens! The man holding the second circuit steps forward, and the exploder is quickly connected to it. Once, twice, three times does the handle purr as it is forced down, by two men now.

Again,—nothing!

“Who connected this charge?”

Captain Yamatogo of the Imperial Japanese Engineers steps forward and salutes; a small saturnine-looking man, so coated with dried sweat and earth that he might again be well taken for the coolie. He is responsible: he was in charge; but, he happens to be the one chosen among many volunteers to go down and light the fuze, if necessary, and to go down and relight it, should it not act the first time. The matter of the failure of the electricity can wait till later. A word, and he turns round, picks up a small portable electric lamp which he straps round his forehead, and slings a thick coil

of safety-fuze over his shoulder. A salute, and he has gone down the gallery, picking his way carefully. There is for the moment no danger, for no fuze has been lit and none can therefore smoulder to flame up again suddenly.

As he strides along, his thoughts run over the possible causes of failure. He ponders over a dull boom which he fancied he had heard proceed from the direction of the tunnel some five minutes ago, just before they connected with the dynamo. No one else had noticed it, apparently, amid the storm of noise. He had decided that his ears must be playing him tricks, for he had done much underground listening recently, and they were strained; but now, down there alone, his thoughts again revert to this sound.

After walking for some two minutes, he almost stumbles into an obstruction; the left side of the gallery and seemingly the top have fallen in. It is in a soft portion of the tunnel lined with timbers, which are splintered and lying all about. He hastily searches the side walls for a gauge mark showing the distance from the mouth. He finds one; he is twenty yards short of the tamping, and therefore the pile of soil and rock is just over the ends of the safety-fuze. Whilst standing there he hears strokes and voices,—voices close to him. He half draws his sword and waits.

This explains the failure. His ears were right. The enemy have driven forward a tube and exploded a small counter-mine, smashing in the side of the gallery. Well, they seem to have succeeded in spoiling the attackers' plan, for the present at any rate. It will be impossible to dig these tons of earth off the fuzes under some hours; the gallery is completely blocked. But stay,—is it? He sees a small black patch of darkness on the right-hand

top corner of the mound. Scrambling up, he digs with his hands, and finds a mere crust of earth. Behind this the opening is just large enough to crawl through. He wriggles along on his belly between the earth and the roof for some ten yards, then the mound slopes away and he stumbles down on to the floor again in the small space between the obstruction and the tamping at the end of the tunnel. He darts to the side of the tunnel and picks up two red ropes. These are the instantaneous - fuzes. Captain Yamatogo knows all that is to be known about fuzes; he knows that to light the instantaneous - fuze means death, as the flame would flash straight down to the charge before he could move. Not wanting to die uselessly, he heaves at the fuzes to try and pull them and the pieces of safety-fuze joined to their ends, from under the load of earth. He pulls, but they do not yield; dropping them, he whips out his knife. He will cut the instantaneous-fuze and splice on a longish piece of safety-fuze, long enough to allow him to get back over the obstruction after lighting. Two minutes' work will do it.

At that moment he again hears a voice, still closer than before. There is no time to lose, not even two minutes; he can even hear that it is a Russian voice. Quickly he makes up his mind, but, his resolve taken, he proceeds calmly. Taking out a little Japanese flag, he sticks it into the earth beside him, and squats down on his heels, peels the end of the cut fuze, and then fills his pipe with tobacco. As he does this, he cannot help recalling with a grim smile that it must be just above where he now squats that he was kicked, as a coolie, by a Russian officer. He then thinks of his wife at home near Osaka, and his two merry-eyed little boys. Still thinking of them he measures, and

sees that only one end of the fuze will go into his diminutive pipe-bowl at a time.

He lights the pipe, and takes a long pull. Expelling the smoke with a hoarse cry of *Banzai*, he presses the end of the fuze hard into the little glowing bowl. There is a hiss and a jet of sparks.

To those watching, great Fujiyama itself seems to erupt skywards from the Fort of —shan. Within two minutes the men of his company are running and stumbling above what was once Captain Yamatogo of the Imperial Japanese Engineers.

II.

Now it's all over, if you wish to see what was the Fort of —shan, come along with me up to what looks like a collection of rubbish heaps over on the top of yonder hill.

You will see the Abomination of Desolation.

Inside what was the fort, the surface of rock and of earth, on level and on slope, is gashed and pitted into mounds and holes, the craters of the exploding eleven-inch shells. These monstrous projectiles have rained on the place until the defenders must have felt like the doomed dwellers in the Cities of the Plain.

Down below, where surfaces of broken concrete appear in patches of grey among the rock, were once the mouths of the bomb-proof casemates wherein the tortured garrison sought refuge from the hail of falling steel, vaulted casemates cut into the solid rock or roofed over with concrete where the rock gave place to softer material. Well had they done their duty even against the eleven-inch shell, until the end came. Now, some of the openings facing the rear or gorge of the fortress are sealed to the

top with fallen earth and pulverised rock, some are only partially closed by the landslide from the parapet over them, their cracked arches still standing. With a sickening feeling thought turns to the men within them at the moment of the cataclysm, possibly snatching a few moments' rest, the majority, in all probability, sick or wounded. All round above stretches in a broken line the shapeless mass of the huge main parapet, and just inside this, there are remains of the concrete revetment wall which supported the interior of the parapet,—the gun platforms and emplacements. This wall, which, in its former ordered neatness, almost suggested the idea of a battle-ship in concrete, with its searchlight emplacements, steps, davits and tackle for hoisting shell, and the regularly spaced little doors for the shelters, range-dials, ammunition-recesses and cartridge-stores, now bulges this way and that, here cracked, there fallen with the unsupported earth flowing over it. Along one face, which was the front of the fortress, the only traces of it now to be seen are occasional corners appearing from the mound of loose earth and rock.

One cannot walk straight; it is necessary to avoid the boulders which lie scattered over the ground, or the shell-craters which honeycomb it. There a huge tranverse, which is evidently of softer earth, still stands, a shapeless mound, its face all pock-marked with craters till it looks almost like a gigantic sponge. There are bodies everywhere; some lying on the surface, in the free air of Heaven; some buried, so that a hand or a foot alone discloses what is below. Everywhere also are splintered timber, rifles, cartridge-boxes, belts, coats, and all the usual *débris* of a battle-field, with a huge gun overturned or pointing dumbly to the sky to emphasise

that this has been no common battle-field but the fight for a fortress. There is blood too,—but not much, thanks to the merciful dust, which has softly descended in an impalpable mist and covered everything with a grey-brown pall, giving to all a mysterious velvety appearance. It has soaked up the blood, an occasional dark spot being all that is to be seen.

Beyond the huge mound of the parapet, down, deep down, except on one side, still exists the ditch. Some forty feet in depth, it ran like a huge chasm round the whole fortress, in places hewn out of the solid rock, with almost sheer sides. At the angles or corners where the ditch bends are jumbled heaps of concrete, steel beams, and roughly squared stones. They are what remain of the caponieres, those little bomb-proof buildings built so snugly out of the way of shells right down at the bottom, whence machine-guns and quick-firers poured their devastating blight of bullets, along the cruel wire entanglements, in which had been caught the unsuccessful Japanese storming parties. Until these caponieres were silenced or destroyed no soul could live in that veritable chasm of death. All those grey little bodies hanging limp like broken marionettes along the length of the ditch, in the thicket of barbed wire, or lying doubled up and impaled on the stakes of the *trous de loup*, bear witness to the successful part these caponieres had played. The attitudes of some of the dead, who, hanging contorted, still grip a wire convulsively, give evidence of the power of the dynamo above. One of those heaps of dust and *débris* we saw in the casemates now represents the dynamo. Gaps here and there in the maze of wire, with its springy strands all curling up above holes in the ground, show where the contact mines of the defenders burst, or where

the hand-grenades of both sides fell and exploded.

On one side there is no ditch; parapet and ditch seem to have been melted together by an earthquake. Here the mines were sprung. Escarp and counterscarp have crumbled away, and the beetling parapet has slid down and filled up the ditch till the earth and rock has overflowed right on to the glacis beyond. There is no such large crater formed by the explosion as one would have expected, for it has been partially filled up by the mass falling in from all sides. The edge of what was the crater is marked by cracks and fissures, in places more than a foot wide, in the still standing parapet on either side.

The dust gives to everything a soft rounded appearance.

Looking over the glacis, for some hundreds of yards the landscape is seen to be dotted with stones and fragments of rock, till it gives the impression of the South African veldt with its anthills. Further off, that mound shows the lodgement from which the Japanese moles started the last tunnel.

A sickening smell pervades the air.

A Japanese sentry stands motionless against the skyline under an improvised flagstaff. The only sign of life is the feeble flicker of the red and white flag in the almost still air.

TRCUT.

THE FELLOW-WORKERS OF VOLTAIRE.

I.—DIDEROT.

SOME hundred and eighty odd years ago, in a little town in France, a wild boy slipped out of his room at midnight, and crept downstairs in his stocking-feet with the wicked intent of running away to Paris. This time-honoured escapade was defeated by the appearance of Master Denis's resolute old father with the household keys in his hand. "Where are you going?" says he. "To Paris, to join the Jesuits." "Certainly; I will take you there myself to-morrow." And Denis retires tamely and ignominiously to bed.

The next morning the good old father (a master-cutler in the town of Langres) escorted his scapegrace to the capital, as he had desired, entered him at Harcourt College, stayed himself for a fortnight at a neighbouring inn to see that the boy adhered to his intentions; and then went home.

At the college Denis spent his time in learning a great deal for himself and doing, with brilliant ease and the most complete good-nature, a great deal of the work of his school-fellows. He was himself astoundingly clever and astoundingly careless. He learnt mathematics, which could not make him exact, Latin, and English. With that charming readiness to do the stupid boys' lessons for them (washing other peoples rags, as the talent came to be called when he grew older), with his inimitable love of life, his jolly, happy-go-lucky disposition, his open hand and heart, and his merry face, this should surely have been the most popular school-boy that ever lived.

The school-days were all too short. The practical old master-cutler at Langres soon intimated to Denis that it was time to choose a profession. Denis declined to be a doctor, because he had no turn for murder; or a lawyer, because he had no taste for doing other people's business. In brief, he did not want to be anything; he wanted to learn, to study, to look round him. But a shrewd old tradesman was not going to give, even if he could afford to give, any son of his the money to do that. Denis had at home a younger brother, who was to be a priest ("that cursed saint," the graceless Denis called him hereafter), a sister, good and sensible like her father; and a mother, who was tender and foolish over her truant boy, after the fashion of mothers all the world over. Here were three mouths to feed. Denis loved his father with all the impetuous affection of his temperament. He was delighted when, some years later, he went back to Langres and a fellow-townsmen grasped him by the arm saying: "M. Diderot, you are a good man, but if you think you will ever be as good a man as your father, you are much mistaken." But Diderot had never the sort of affection that consists in doing one's utmost for the object of the affection. He preferred to be a care and a trouble to his family and to live by his wits, harum-scarum, merry, and poor. He chose that life, and abided by the choice for ten years.

Three times in that period the old servant of the family tramped all the

way from Langres to Paris with little stores of money hidden in her dress for this dear, naughty scapegrace of a Master Denis; but except for this, he lived on his wits in the most literal sense of the term. He made catalogues and translations; he wrote sermons and thought himself well paid at fifty *écus* the homily; he became a tutor,—until the pupil's stupidity bored him, when he threw up the situation and went hungry to bed. He once indeed so far commanded himself as to remain in this capacity for three months. Then he sought his employer; he could endure it no more. "I am making men of your children, perhaps; but they are fast making a child of me. I am only too well off and comfortable in your house, but I must leave it." And he left.

One Shrove Tuesday he fainted from hunger in his wretched lodgings, and was restored and fed by his landlady. He took a vow that day, and kept it, that, if he had anything to give, he would never refuse a man in need. By the next morning he was as light-hearted as usual again. A bright idea, even the recollection of a few apt lines from Horace, would always restore his cheerfulness. He enjoyed indeed all the blessings of a sanguine nature, and fell into all its faults. The facts that his father was paying his debts, that often he had to sponge on his friends for a dinner, or trick a tradesman for an advantage he could not buy, neither troubled him nor made him work. It is no doubt to his credit that he never stooped, as he might easily have done, to be the literary parasite of some great man, to prostitute his talents to praise and fawn on some ignoble patron. But though that gay, profligate existence has been often made to sound romantic on paper, it was squalid and shabby enough in

reality, with that shabbiness which is of the soul.

In the year 1743, when Diderot was thirty years old, he must needs fall in love. He was lodging with a poor woman and her daughter who kept themselves by doing fine needlework. Anne Toinette Champion (Nanette, Diderot called her), was not only exquisitely fresh and pretty, but she was good, simple, and honest. To gain access to her Diderot stooped to one of the tricks to which his life had made him used. He pretended that he was going to enter a Jesuit seminary, and employed Nanette to make him the necessary outfit. His mouth of gold did the rest. No one, perhaps, who did not live with Diderot and hear him talk "as never man talked," who did not know him in the flesh and fall under the personal influence of his magnetic and all-compelling charm, will ever fully understand it. "Utterly unclean, scandalous, shameless" as many honest and upright people knew him to be, he fascinated them all. Something indeed of that fascination still lingers about him, as the scent of a flower may cling to a coarse, stained parchment. Read the facts of his life, as briefly and coldly stated in some biographical dictionary, and most men will easily dismiss him as a great genius and a great scoundrel. Read the thousand anecdotes that have gathered about his name, of the love his contemporaries bore him, of his generosity, his glowing affections, his passionate pity for sorrow, and his hot zeal for humanity, and it is easy to understand not only the mighty part Diderot played in the great movement which prepared men for freedom and the French Revolution, but his insistent claims on their love and forgiveness.

A little seamstress could not, in the nature of things, resist him long.

The hopeful lover went to Langres to obtain his father's consent to his marriage, which was of course refused. At the date of his wedding, November 6th, 1743, Denis had published nothing at all, had no certain sources of income, and very few uncertain ones. He was, moreover, at first so jealous of his dearest Nanette that he made her give up her trade of needlework, as it brought her too much into contact with the outer world. The pair lived on her mother's savings; and then Denis translated a history of Greece from the English, and kept the wolf from the door a little longer.

Poverty fell, as ever, more hardly on the wife than on the husband. The ever popular Diderot was often asked out to dine with his friends, and always went; while at home Nanette feasted on dry bread, to be sure that this fine lover of hers should be able to have his cup of coffee and his game of chess at the *café* of the Regency as usual. Of course Denis took advantage of her talent for self-sacrifice. His writings contain much sentimental pity, expressed in the most beautiful language, for the condition and the physical disadvantages of women; and he spoke of himself most comfortably as a good husband and father, and honestly believed that he was both. But he began to neglect his wife directly his first passion for her was spent. She was not perfect, it is true. Of a certain rigidity in her goodness, and a certain bourgeois narrowness in her view of life, she may be justly accused. But it remains undeniable that she was thrifty and unselfish at home, while her husband was profligate and self-indulgent abroad, that she saved and worked for her children, while he wrote fine pages on paternal devotion, and that he never gave her the con-

sideration and forbearance he demanded from her as a matter of course. Before her first child was born the poor girl had lost her mother, and had no one in all the world to depend on but that most untrustworthy creature on earth, a genius of bad character.

In the year 1745 Denis sent her to Langres for a long visit to his parents, to effect if possible a reconciliation with them.

The man who called himself "the apologist of strong passions," who thought marriage "a senseless vow" and "was always very near to the position that there is no such thing as an absolute rule of right and wrong," would not be likely to be faithful. He was not faithful. There soon loomed on the scene a Madame de Puisieux (the wife of a barrister) aged about five and twenty, charming, accomplished, dissolute. Diderot plunged headlong into love with her, as he plunged headlong into everything. To be sure, she was abominably extravagant and always wanting money. To gratify her demands Diderot wrote, most characteristically, *THE ESSAY ON MERIT AND VIRTUE*, and brought Merit and Virtue the money he received in payment. But Madame's love of fine clothes was insatiable. Between a Good Friday and Easter Day her lover composed for her *THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS* which first made him famous, which were paid the compliment of burning, and for which his mistress received fifty louis.

The history of the inspiration of masterpieces would form a peculiarly interesting insight into human nature. It may be set down to the credit of Madame de Puisieux (history knows of nothing else to her credit) that her rapacity at least forced this incorrigible ne'er-do-weel upon his destiny, and first turned Diderot, the most delightful scamp in the capital, into

Diderot the hard-working philosopher and man of genius.

Nanette came home presently, having earned the love and admiration of the little family at Langres, and put up with Madame de Puisieux as best she could. Other children were born to her, and died; only one, little Angélique, survived. Of the quantity of Diderot's love for this child there is no doubt; it is only the quality that is questionable. Self-indulgent to himself, he was weakly indulgent to her. She was apt at learning so, when they both felt inclined, he taught her music and history. Later, when she was ill, he wrote letters about her full of ardent affection; but he left her mother to nurse her and went off gaily to amuse himself with his friends, and then took great credit for having given "orders which marked attention and interest" in her, before he went out and dined with Grimm under the trees in the Tuileries.

Of course Angélique loved the lively good-natured father much the better of the two. Of her mother the daughter herself said hereafter, with a sad truth, that she would have had a happier life if she could have cared less for her husband.

However, Denis was working now, and working meant, or should mean, ease and competence.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS had made men turn and look at him. True, their audacious freedom was not pleasing to the Government; but what did Diderot care for that? His ideas rolled off his pen as the words rolled off his tongue. "I do not compose, I am no author," he wrote once. "I read, or I converse. I ask questions, or I give answers." The lines should be placed as a motto over each of his works. That they are literally true accounts for all his defects as a writer, and for all his charm.

In 1749 he happened to be talking about a certain famous operation for cataract, and afterwards wrote down his reflections on it. To a man born blind atheism, said Diderot, is surely a natural religion. He sent his LETTER ON THE BLIND FOR THE USE OF THOSE WHO SEE to the great chief of the party of which his PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS had proclaimed himself a member. Voltaire replied that for his part if he were blind, he should have recognised a great intelligence who provided so many substitutes for sight; and the friendship between Arouet and Denis was started with a will.

On July 24th of that same year Diderot found himself a prisoner in the fortress of Vincennes. He was not wholly surprised; no literary man was astonished at being imprisoned in those days. Diderot was perfectly aware that since the publication of THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS he had been suspect of the police; he was also aware that his LETTER ON THE BLIND contained a sneer on the subject of a fine lady, the *chère amie* of d'Argenson, the War Minister. For company he had PARADISE LOST and his own buoyant temperament. He made a pen out of a toothpick, and ink out of the slate scraped from the side of his window mixed with wine; and with characteristic good-nature wrote down this simple recipe for writing materials on the wall of his cell, for the benefit of future sufferers.

Better than all, he was the friend of Voltaire, and Voltaire's Madame du Châtelet was a near relative of the governor of Vincennes. After twenty-one days of wire-pulling Socrates Diderot, as Madame du Châtelet called him, was removed as the fruit of her efforts, from the fortress to the castle of Vincennes, put on parole, allowed the society of his wife and

children, with pen, ink, and books to his heart's content. One day Madame de Puisieux came to see him,—in attire too magnificent to be entirely for the benefit of a poor dog of a prisoner like myself, thinks Denis. That night he climbed over the high wall of the *enceinte* of the castle, and finding her, as he had expected, amusing herself with another admirer at a *fête*, renounced her as easily and hotly as he had fallen in love with her. He had one far more famous visitor in Vincennes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As they walked together in the wood of Vincennes Denis, with his over-running fecundity of idea, suggested to Jean-Jacques, it is said, that *ESSAY AGAINST CIVILISATION* which first made him famous.

When his imprisonment had lasted three months Diderot, at the angry urging of the booksellers of Paris, was released.

In 1745 one of those booksellers, Le Breton, had suggested to him "the scheme of a book that should be all books." Enterprising England had been first in the field. To Francis Bacon belongs the honour of having originated the idea of an *Encyclopædia*. Chambers, an Englishman, first worked out that idea. It was a French translation of Chambers that Le Breton took to Diderot, and it was Diderot who breathed upon it the breath of life.

That this knavish bookseller's choice should have fallen out of all the world upon him, might have inclined even so whole-hearted a sceptic as Denis himself to have believed in an Intelligence behind the world. He was hungry and poor, and must have work that would bring him bread. Well, there were thousands of persons in that position; but out of those thousands there was only one with the hot, sanguine courage to undertake so risky a scheme, with the "fiery

patience" to work it in the face of overwhelming odds, and with the exuberant genius to make it the mighty masterpiece it became.

Diderot saw its possibilities at once. In another second, as it were, he saw all he could himself do, and all he could not do. He could write about most things. He could study the trades and industries of France, if it took him thirty years of labour the mere thought of which would daunt most men; by giving their history he could glorify for ever those peaceful arts which make a nation truly great and happy. He could write on gallantry, on genius, on libraries, on anagrams. For his fertile spirit scarcely any subject was too great or too small. Against intolerance he could bring to bear "the concentrated energy of a profound conviction." Religion itself he could attack in so far as it interfered with men's liberty; and miracle he must attack, because in the words of Voltaire, "Men will not cease to be persecutors till they have ceased to be absurd." If he had, just to appease the authorities and to give the book a chance of a hearing, to truckle here and there to prejudice and superstition, well, Diderot could lie as heartily and as cheerfully as he did all things.

But the inexact school-boy of Harcourt College was no mathematician, and knew his limitations. With the freemasonry of genius he saw in a single flashing glance that d'Alembert was the man to share with him the parentage of this wonderful child. He stormed the calm savant in his attic above the glazier's shop, overwhelmed, prayed, pressed, bewitched him, and with "his soul in his eyes and his lips" woke in d'Alembert's quiet breast an enthusiasm which was at least some reflex of his own.

For three years the two worked out night and day the details of their

scheme. In 1750 Diderot poured out, with the warmth and glow of a woman in love, the prospectus and plan of his work. The overwhelmingness of his enthusiasm had forced a privilege for it from the authorities. In 1750 appeared d'Alembert's preface, and the first volume was launched on the world.

From this time until 1765 the history of Diderot and the Encyclopædia is the same thing. For fifteen years he worked at it unremittingly through storm and sunshine. The idea possessed and dominated him. In a garret on the fifth floor in his house in the Rue de Taranne, wrapped in an old dressing-gown, with wild hair, bare neck, and bent back, the message he must deliver through the Encyclopædia bubbled into his heart and went straight from his heart to his pen.

"This thing will surely produce a great revolution in the human mind," he said of it in passionate exultation: "We shall have served humanity." For this Diderot, who disbelieved so loudly and truculently in God, believed hopefully in the improvement of human kind, and had for the race so vast and so generous a pity that he sacrificed to it the coarse pleasures his coarse nature loved, his time, his peace, his worldly advancement, his safety, and his friend.

In 1752 a Royal Edict of matchless imbecility suppressed the first two volumes of the book, at the same time begging its promoters to continue to bring out others. Every year a volume appeared until 1757. The success of the thing was prodigious, and with reason, for it said what, so far, men had only dared to think. It gave the history, quite innocently, of the taxes,—of *gabelle*, of *taille*, of *corvée*—and they stood "damned to everlasting fame"; it showed the infamous abuses of the game-laws; it manifested

the miracles of science. As by a magnet the genius of Diderot had drawn to him, as contributors, all the genius of France; while always at his side, co-editing, restraining his imprudence, yet working as he worked himself, was d'Alembert.

And, then, in 1759, came the great suspension. D'Alembert had written the article on Geneva, and that mad emotionalist, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in the most famous treachery in the history of literature, turned on the philosophic party in his letter to d'Alembert *SUR LES SPECTACLES*. The authorities of France joined hands with insulted Calvinism and with Rousseau, and declared the Encyclopædia accursed and forbidden. That would have been bad enough; but there was something worse. Beaten down by storm and insult d'Alembert fell back from the fray and left Diderot to fight the battle alone.

He started up in a second, raging and cursing, and went out with his life in his hand. Seizing his pen he slashed, hewed, and hacked with that reckless weapon on every side. Vincennes and the Bastille loomed ominously; he was never sure one day, says his daughter, of being allowed to continue the next; but he went on. The authorities might burn, but they could not destroy; they might prohibit, but they could not daunt a Diderot.

In 1764, despite galleys and bonfires, kings, ministers, and *lettres de cachet*, the last ten volumes were ready to appear in a single issue and to crown his life's labour, when fate struck him a last crushing blow. When the manuscript of the articles had been burnt he discovered the false Le Breton, fearing for his own safety, had cut out all such passages as he thought might endanger it; and had thus mutilated and ruined the ten volumes past recall.

Diderot burst, literally, into tears of rage. Despair and frenzy seized him. Was this to be the end? Not while he had breath in his body! He attacked Le Breton with an unclean fury not often matched, and in 1765, the volumes appeared, as whole as his talent and energy could make them. It was Diderot who said that if he must choose between Racine, bad husband, father, and friend, but sublime poet; and Racine, good husband, father, and friend, and dull honest man, he would choose the first. "Of the wicked Racine, what remains? Nothing. Of Racine, the man of genius, the work is eternal." When one considers his Herculean labours for the Encyclopædia, one is almost tempted to judge him as he judged Racine.

All the time, too, he was busy in many other ways. There has surely never been such a good-natured man of letters. The study door in the attic was not only open to all his friends, but to all the Grub Street vagrants and parasites of Paris. Diderot not only purified his friend d'Holbach's German-French and profusely helped his dearest Grimm in the *CORRESPONDANCE LITTÉRAIRE*; he not only corrected proofs for Helvétius, Raynal, and Galiani, gave lessons in metaphysics to a German princess, and was, for himself, besides an encyclopedist, a novelist, an art-critic, and a playwright; he also wrote dedicatory epistles for needy musicians, "reconciled brothers, settled lawsuits, solicited pensions." He planned a comedy for an unsuccessful dramatic author, and, in roars of laughter, indited an advertisement of a hair-wash to oblige an illiterate hairdresser. The story has been told often, but still bears telling afresh, of the young man who came to him with a personal satire against Diderot himself. "I thought," says the satirist, "you

would give me a few crowns to suppress it." "I can do better for you than that," says Diderot, not in the least annoyed. "Dedicate it to the brother of the Duke of Orleans, who hates me; take it to him and he will give you assistance." "But I do not know the Prince." "Sit down, and I will write the dedication for you." He did, and so ably, that the satirist obtained a handsome sum.

Another day he composed for the benefit of a woman, who had been deserted by the Duc de la Vrillière, a most touching appeal to the Duke's feelings. "While I lived in the light of your love, I did not ask your pity. But of all your passion there only remains to me your portrait, — and that I must sell to-morrow for bread." The Duke sent her fifty louis.

It is hardly necessary to say that Diderot's friends availed themselves as freely of his purse as of his brains. In return for his mighty expenditure of time, talent, and energy for the Encyclopædia he never received more than the luxurious sum of £130 a year. As he was the sort of person who always took a carriage if he wanted one, who had a pretty taste in miniatures and *objets d'art* which he found it positively imperative to gratify, as he loved high play and always lost, —as, in brief, he could never deny himself or anybody else anything—it was physically impossible he should ever be solvent.

One graceless hanger-on turned back as he was leaving him one day. "M. Diderot, do you know any natural history?" "Well," says Diderot, "enough to tell a pigeon from a humming-bird." "Have you ever heard of the *formica leo*? It is a very busy little creature; it burrows a hole in the earth like a funnel, covers the surface with a fine sand, attracts a number of stupid insects to it, takes them, sucks them dry,

and says, 'M. Diderot, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning.'"

In 1755, during his work at the *Encyclopædia* and for those innumerable idle persons who had much better have worked for themselves, poor Nannette went on a second fatal visit to Langres and gave her husband the opportunity of falling in love with Mademoiselle Volland, and starting a memorable correspondence.

Sophie Volland was a rather elderly young lady, with spectacles, and a good deal of real cleverness and erudition. Whether Diderot, who was now a man of forty-two, was ever literally in love with her or whether he was "less than lover but more than friend," remains uncertain. His letters to her are warmly interesting, frank, natural, spontaneous, with many passages of exquisite beauty and thoughtfulness. There is but one fault,—that fatal one without which Diderot would not have been Diderot at all but some loftier man—his irrepressible indecency.

He had much to tell Mademoiselle. The words seem to trip over each other in his anxiety to show her all he had done and felt. He was now famous. The *Encyclopædia* had thrown open to him, cutler's son though he was, the doors of the *salons*; a great quarrel he had had with Rousseau in 1757,—the dingy details of which there is neither interest or profit in recalling—had made him the talk of the *cafés*.

But this loud, explosive Denis was scarcely a social light. He said himself that he only liked company in which he could say anything. And what Diderot meant by *anything* was considered indecorous even in that freest of all free-spoken ages. Good old Madame Geoffrin lost her patience with him, not only for his licence, but for talking so movingly about

duty and neglecting all his own. She was not going to ignore his Mademoiselle Volland. She treated him "like a beast" he said, and advised his wife to do the same. As for Madame Necker,—"who is infatuated with me," said the complacent Denis himself—she too "judged great men by their conduct and not by their talents," which was very awkward indeed for a Diderot.

There was a third house where he visited much more often and got on much better; but that was not because Madame d'Épinay was its mistress, but because Grimm was its presiding genius. His friendship with the cool German had a sentimentality and a demonstrativeness which Englishman find hard to forgive, but which were sincere enough not the less. Grimm took complete control of his impulsive, generous colleague. Because Grimm bade him, Denis began in 1759 writing his *SALONS*, or criticisms on pictures, and became "the first critic in France who made criticism eloquent"; while, when Grimm was away, almost all the work of the *CORRESPONDANCE LITTÉRAIRE* fell on Diderot's too good-natured shoulders. When his dearest friend was not there, Diderot's steps turned much less often towards Madame d'Épinay's house.

In 1759 he first spent an autumn at the only place at which he was perfectly at home, and where he soon became a regular visitor.

Baron d'Holbach was first of all "an atheist, and not ashamed"; but he was also very rich, very liberal, very hospitable, with a charming country house at Grandval, near Charenton, where he entertained the free-thinkers of all nations and where his table was equally celebrated for its cook and its conversation. The former was so good that Denis was always over-eating himself; and the

latter was, in a moral sense, so bad, that he enjoyed it to the utmost.

The Grandval household was fettered by none of the tiresome rules which are apt to make visiting, when one has passed the easily adaptable season of youth, a hazardous experiment. The hostess "fulfilled no duties and exacted none." The visitors were as free as in their own homes. Diderot would get up at six, take a cup of tea, fling open the windows to admit the air and sunshine, and then fall to work. At two came dinner. The house was always full of people who met now for the first time.

The unbridled talk of d'Holbach's mother-in-law continually set the table in a roar. Diderot himself was at his best, full of good-nature and gaiety, laughing one minute and crying the next, warm in generous pity for sorrow, quick to be irritated or appeased, pouring out torrents of splendid ideas and then of grossest ribaldry, his mouth speaking always from the fulness of his heart, utterly indiscreet, brilliant, ingenuous, delightful; an orator "drunk with the exuberance of his own verbosity," who could argue that black was white, and then that white was black again, and whose seduction and danger lay in the fact that he always fully believed both impossibilities himself. No subject that was started found him cool or neutral. "He is too hot an oven," said Voltaire; "everything gets burnt in him."

When the dinner was over he would thrust his arm through his host's and walk in the garden with him. He at least did his best to imbue the arid atheism of d'Holbach with luxuriance and warmth. At seven, they came back to the house, and supper was followed by picquet and by talk till they went to bed.

Among many other visitors whom

Diderot met while he was what he called a widower at Grandval, were at least four Englishmen,—Sterne, Wilkes, Garrick, and Hume.

Diderot has been well called the most English of the Frenchmen of the eighteenth century. He began his literary career by making translations from our language. In a passion of admiration he had fallen at the feet of the "divine Richardson," and imitated *PAMELA* in a very bad novel of his own, *LA RELIGIEUSE*; in another, *JACQUES LE FATALISTE*, he tried to accustom France to romance in the style of Sterne. He was familiar with the works of Pope, Chaucer, Tillotson, and Locke; and he has left a noble and famous criticism upon Shakespeare: "He is like the St. Christopher of Notre Dame, an unshapen Colossus, rudely carven, but beneath whose legs we can all walk without our brows touching him."

To Garrick Diderot paid exaggerated homage, and went into raptures over the wonderful play of his face. He admired Wilkes's morals as well as his mind, and in 1768 wrote him a flattering letter. As for Hume, he liked the delightful Diderot better than any other philosopher he met in France. It is Diderot who tells the story of Hume saying at d'Holbach's table,—"I do not believe there is such a thing as an atheist; I have never seen one"—and of d'Holbach's replying,—"Then you have been a little unfortunate; you are sitting now with seventeen." Sterne, whose *TRISTRAM SHANDY* was delighting France in general and Diderot in particular when its author was at Grandval, on his return home sent Denis English books.

In 1761 Diderot produced a play. *THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY* is, it must be confessed, a sad bore with his lachrymose moralities; but he is exhilarating compared to *THE*

NATURAL SON, Diderot's second play, which was acted in 1771. The universal Denis was no playwright.

In 1772 he published the ten volumes of plates which he had laboriously prepared to supplement the text of the *Encyclopædia*; and in May, 1773, when he was sixty years old he visited Catherine the Great.

He had had relations with her for some years. One fine day, in 1765, it had suddenly occurred to him that his dearest Angélique, over whom he had poured such streams of paternal sentiment, would have positively no dowry. Her fond, improvident father had of course never attempted to save anything for her, and, if he knew his own disposition, must have known he never would save anything. The only thing he had of value in the world, besides his own head, was his library. Catherine the Great was a magnificent patron of letters; and Diderot was her especial *protégé*. He would sell his books to her! She delightedly accepted the offer. She gave him for them a sum equal to about £700, and appointed him her librarian at a salary of a thousand livres a year, fifty years' payment being made in advance.

For the first time in his history Diderot found himself rich. When a patron so munificent asked him to visit her, how could he decline? All the *Encyclopædist*s were her warm admirers; she herself used to say modestly that Voltaire had made her the fashion. Denis hated long journeys and loved Paris; but go he must. He stopped at the Hague,—where he characteristically admired the beauty of the women, and the turbot—and at last arrived at St. Petersburg.

For a monarch who complained that she might have been the head of Medusa, as everyone turned to stone

when she entered the room, Diderot must have been a singularly refreshing guest. It was one of the most charming traits in his character that he respected persons no more than a child does, or a dog. All etiquette fled before his breezy, impulsive personality. The very clothes he arrived in were so shabby, her Majesty had to present him immediately with a court suit. He was with her every afternoon; he said what he liked, and as much as he liked, which was a very great deal. In the heat and excitement of his arguments he would hammer the Imperial knees black and blue, till the Empress had to put a table in front of her for safety. If he ever did recollect her august position, "*Allons!*" she would cry; "between men everything is permissible." He evolved the most magnificent, impossible schemes for the government of her empire,—which would have upset it in a week if she had tried them, said she. During his stay, his dearest Grimm was also a guest. In March, 1774, Denis left; and by the time he reached Paris again, was persuaded that he had enjoyed himself very much indeed.

Four years later, in 1778, he first saw in the flesh the great elder brother of his order, the master-worker in the temple slowly lifting its gorgeous fane towards the light,—Voltaire. They had not always agreed on paper; their goal had been the same, but not the road to it. "But we are not so far apart," said old Voltaire; "we only want a conversation to understand each other." Accordingly, when he came on his last triumph to the capital, Diderot went to see him in the Villette's house on what is now the Quai Voltaire. Few details of their interviews have been preserved; but it is said that they discussed Shakespeare, and that when Diderot

left, Voltaire said of him: "He is clever, but he lacks one very necessary talent,—that of dialogue." On his part, Diderot compared Voltaire to a haunted castle falling into ruins,—"but one can easily see it is still inhabited by a magician."

Voltaire died. Diderot was himself growing old; in Russia he had acquired, he thought, the seeds of a lung disease. Angélique married a M. de Vandeul, on the strength of the dowry provided by the sale of the library. Madame Diderot, poor soul, had become not a little worried and embittered. It is the careless who make the careworn, and Diderot was almost to the last the engaging, light-hearted scamp whose troubles are always flung on to some patient scapegoat.

In 1783, or 1784, the death of Mademoiselle Volland gave him a real grief. Twenty years before he had written to her with an exquisite eloquence of the calm and gentle approach of the great rest Death: "One longs for the end of life as, after hard toil one longs for the end of the day." He proved in himself the truth of his own words. He had not even a hope of the immortality of the soul; but he had worked hard, the evening was come, and he was weary. He was still working,—writing the *Life of Seneca*. He was still his all too lovable, spontaneous self, talking with that marvellous inspiration of which the best of his books can convey little idea.

A fortnight before he died he moved into a new home, given him by Catherine the Great, in the Rue Richelieu, opposite the birthplace of Molière and almost next door to the house where Voltaire had lived with Madame du Châtelet and after her death. The *curé* of the parish came

to see him, and suggested that a retraction of his sceptical opinions would produce good effect. "I dare say it would," said Denis, "but it would be a most impudent lie." In his last conversation Madame de Vandeul records that she heard him say: "The first step towards philosophy is unbelief."

The end came very suddenly. On the last day of July, 1784, he was supping with his wife and daughter, and at dessert took an apricot. Nannette gently remonstrated. "How in the world can that do me any harm?" he cried. They were his last words and supremely characteristic. He died as he sat, a few minutes later.

If to be great means to be good, then Denis Diderot was a little man; but if to be great means to do great things in the teeth of great obstacles, then none can refuse him a place in the temple of the Immortals.

His fiction, taken from rottenness, has returned to it, and is justly dead. His plays were damned on their appearance. His moving criticisms on art and the drama, his satirical dialogue, *RAMEAU'S NEPHEW*—nearly all the printed talk of this most matchless of all talkers—are rarely read. His letters to Mademoiselle Volland will last so long as man is the proper study of mankind. But it is as the father of the *Encyclopedia* that Denis Diderot merits eternal recognition. Guilty as he was in almost every relation of life towards the individual, for mankind, in the teeth of danger and of defection, at the ill-paid sacrifice of the best years of his exuberant life, he produced that book which first levelled a free path to knowledge and enfranchised the soul of his generation.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

PEOPLE WHO IMAGINE VAIN THINGS.

A VERY curious question, not often discussed because it is so very obvious, is the question of relative values; in other words the determination of what to us is the value of many desirable or indispensable things this life has to offer us, irrespective of the standard of comparison we have in our medium of exchange. Nearly everything has its relative value not connected with the market-price but depending on our own individual idiosyncracies. Consider for a moment the value, to a child, of a dearly beloved headless rag of a doll; the value, to an enthusiastic collector, of a battered farthing of King Canute, if that monarch coined farthings in his day; or to take another homely instance, the disdainfully reduced value of a sweetly trimmed hat, priced say three guineas in the milliner's window, to a lady who thinks she "would look a fright in it!" The doll and the farthing are endowed with a totally fictitious value, an unearned increment existing only in the owner's mind, while the hat loses for the moment every penny it ever was honestly worth, and for no fault of its own.

This faculty of setting up our own individual standard against the tyranny of conventional rules and regulations could make our life much happier than it is if we exercised it a little more, not allowing ourselves to be influenced so much by the conventional standard of the majority. We need have no fear that it would carry us to an impracticable length, for though a private standard is almost without restriction, there is mostly a

certain safe limit inherent in the objects of our predilection. We may imagine our geese to be swans; we very often do this and no harm is done, because of a slight superficial resemblance which we trust may deceive others as well as ourselves, but we never call them nightingales. This truth was very quaintly formulated by Ruskin when he told us that, "One may look at a girl till one believes she's an angel, because, in the best of her, she is one, but one can't look at a cockchafer till one believes it is a girl." The great critic in this instance probably expressed himself in such very forcible terms because the obvious sometimes requires to be forcibly recalled to our minds.

For all we know, Diogenes may have looked at his celebrated tub till he believed it was as good as a mansion, because it answered the same purpose to him; as a modest dwelling it evidently must have been worth more than its market-value to him, and we can follow his example by being so pleased with our own modest semi-detached suburban villa that we would not exchange it for a mansion in Park Lane. New tenants have been known to say this, and honestly believe it too; and sometimes, if the tenant is of an especially imaginative turn of mind, he believes it even after discovering that the basement is damp. He does not readily admit this; he cannot very well say that "he likes it damp," but he will ask you with a significant look, when you call his attention to it, if you have ever been in a Park

Lane basement? This is the happy temperament that imagines vain things and extracts from life more than its maximum of joy,—if this Irish bull be allowed for the sake of its truth. Watch the look of immeasurable pride in the eyes of a newly married couple when they show you the brand-new brass fittings in the small bathroom,—“the acme, now isn’t it, of domestic perfection?” They are cheap enough by the gross, as the builder knows; but who can estimate their value to the young people beginning house-keeping, immensely proud as they are of their little home and all that therein is?

Some people never come down from the heights, remaining in cloudland all their lives, never sobered by the actual dimensions of Acacia Villa, or by the fact that these superior fittings are very ordinary and are repeated on both sides of them, and across the road to boot, in every little house on the new building-estate. They remain to the end true followers of Diogenes, attributing to themselves, their homes, and belongings a fictitious value far beyond what the world, with the kindest intentions, can discover in them.

While we, as individuals, can establish such a private standard of values, often adding thereby much to our happiness, it would seem as if collectively we must be debarred from this inestimable practice and must measure everything by one matter-of-fact rule, using the established monetary standard for the purpose of comparing or assimilating dissimilar things, a feat in itself impossible and giving us, if so disposed, considerable food for reflection. Yet we soon discover, on looking closely into the matter that a common standard is too rigid and frequently very difficult of application, and that fancy and imagination ought also to play their part in

public affairs. For instance, by excluding imagination altogether we have arrived at the singular conclusion that the services of a Chancellor of the Exchequer and of a Bishop of a Western Diocese are of the same value to the community, and we accordingly pay them each £5,000 a year. Now if anyone should try to determine what return we get for the money in each case, he at once loses himself in a maze of difficulties. Our souls are of infinitely greater value than our purses, no matter how full; but on the other hand the number of souls in the said diocese is so much smaller than the number of purses in the United Kingdom. On the whole one is glad not to have to give any reasons for this singular computation of relative values; there can be little doubt that measured by our individual standards a marked preference would have been shown either way.

In the domain of literature and art our so-called practical standard fails us completely, and we all dwell in cloudland together. We either treat a book or a picture as the lady treated the hat, contemptuously as of no value to us, or we imitate the collector of coins and give sums of gold in exchange for brass. We go so far that when the yard-measure fails to meet the requirements of our imagination we fly to the extreme of using a degree of longitude in a manner of speaking. This tendency to imagine vain things explains among other things the price recently paid for Titian’s portrait of Ariosto,—which of course the critics have hastened to assure us is no portrait of Ariosto and not painted by Titian. It may be a real bargain at £30,000, but the disproportion between the canvas and the cash is a little startling. Granted that a unique work of art is almost priceless, and that any scarce thing is worth what some-

body is prepared to give for it, yet there surely is a limit even for such a treasure, because pictures by Titian are not so very scarce after all. Not less than six hundred are known, and taking this purchase as a rough and ready standard of value, we arrive at the enormous sum of £18,000,000 sterling as the value of what is left, only of what is left, of one man's lifework. This is an imaginary valuation with a vengeance!

No one in the least quarrels with the acquisition of this gem of art for the nation. We may all value the picture by our own standard and arrive at curious conclusions accordingly, but a great nation has as much a right to the best and most expensive Titian as a great king has to a Kohinoor, a Pitt, or a Braganza diamond. They are all cloudland treasures, but even in the light of a cloudland transaction the price paid for the Titian is staggering when we remember that with all its perfections it is not everlasting, while the capital sum will yield an interest of about £1,000 annually for ages and ages after the painting itself shall have crumbled into dust.

A very popular author, now dead, appears to have foreseen this peculiar transaction and has left on record *his* valuation of a picture by Titian. In his Autobiography, prudently published after his death, Anthony Trollope remarks: "If Titian were to send us a portrait from the other world, as certain dead poets send their poetry, by means of a medium, it would be some time before the art critic of *THE TIMES* would discover its value." "Not offering thirty thousand pounds all at once," thinks the author of *BARCHESTER TOWERS*; "chaffering a bit at first, you know."

The bright side of this bargain is that the nation only paid £11,500, which was probably quite enough,

while benevolent art-lovers paid the not inconsiderable overcharge. There is comfort, too, in the odd £500; a few pounds look well in a valuation, conveying the impression that even in cloudland ways and means are sometimes carefully considered.

Trollope had his own troubles, not a few, in connection with the imaginary valuations which so upset the never too steady literary market. As he himself tells us, the reading public gave him, first and last, only £727. 11s. 3d. for *THE WARDEN* and *BARCHESTER TOWERS* together, but paid him £3,525 for *CAN YOU FORGIVE HER*, while for *THE KELLYS* AND *THE O'KELLYS* he never received a single penny. Knowing his own work, and being without any special predilection for any one of his novels, he frankly confesses that he does not understand these valuations in the least, but on the whole was not inclined to be too hard on the said reading public in consideration of the handsome total, £68,939. 17s. 5d., paid him for his lifework;—somewhat less than Titian's as we have seen, but acceptable, coming from a not too discerning public.

We do not often get the benefit of such actual and precise figures as Trollope gives us in his Autobiography. Rumour, which is too often all we have to go by, deals in round figures and disdains shillings and pence as much as Mr. Mantalini did. We know that Milton received £10 for *PARADISE LOST*; Voltaire got £8,000 for the *HENRIADE*; Mr. Hall Caine is said to have received £20,000 for the *ETERNAL CITY*, a superb price surely, like that of the Ariosto, odd pence being not worth mentioning. There is much in this singular sequence and comparison of values to throw a doubt on the value of public or private standards.

In whatever pertains more especi-

ally to our love of the beautiful and to our own personal adornments, we naturally are much given to imagine vain things. Fortunately, and unavoidably as we may say, the greatest factor in human affairs, female beauty, has never been subjected to or measured by any rigid and common standard. Here at least we are at liberty to give free rein to our fancy, if we like, and for the general happiness of mankind we freely avail ourselves of it, living in imaginary cloudland once at least in our lives without being convicted of imagining a vain thing. At least let us hope so. Beauty herself must be adorned nowadays, for cloudland is not Mount Olympus, and our womankind has to conform more or less to the established rigorous rule of fashion; yet was there ever a field in which vainer things were imagined? We can safely leave this branch of the subject to the reader's own imagination; but in one department of fashion, that of its jewels and gems, values, real and imaginary, are so strangely mixed that we cannot pass it by without a few words of wonder, marvelling how such things can be.

Diamonds and precious stones have always appealed to what we have of the magpie in our constitution, but we have been at the same time ready enough to admit that their extraordinary value is purely imaginary. They have, it is true, a positive market-value which has, up to a certain point also, nothing fanciful about it, calculated to within a shilling at so much per carat by experts, about whom we may have to say a word by and by. But there rises before the mind the sad picture of the proud Queen of Naples, mournfully inspecting the brilliant stones in the royal crown of the Two Sicilies, saved from the dynastic wreck after Gaeta, regretfully deciding in her great

pecuniary distress to sell or pawn the precious jewels, — only to find that her graceless consort had stolen a march upon her and that these same lovely gems, instead of being worth a king's ransom, were substituted paste. The poor Queen had not noticed any difference, and if she had left the crown under the glass shade in the ex-royal drawing-room, nobody would have been a bit the wiser or the worse. This account of a deplorable affair is told in Daudet's *ROIS EN EXIL*; and knowing what diamonds are like, what paste is like, and what the dissolute King Bomba of Naples was like, we must admit it is exceedingly probable.

When diamonds or other precious stones are very large, the standard value becomes problematical, the impossibility of finding a purchaser with so much money to spend having to be taken into consideration. It is obviously absurd to value the Braganza diamond at sixteen million sterling; this may be flattering to the owner, but if he ever were to find himself in the poor Queen of Naples's sad case he would undoubtedly have to accept a little reduction, to effect a ready sale. In Eastern countries in olden times when carats and standards were things unknown, such unique gems were roughly and conveniently said to be worth a kingdom or a province, as kingdoms then went; and seeing how fanciful and unreal the whole business is, this was as good a valuation as any other.

In this case again it is permissible to suppose that a contented dweller in cloudland, — our friends of Acacia Villa, let us say — get far more pleasure out of a pretty Parisian diamond brooch from Regent Street than the owner of the famed Braganza derives from his unsalable property, which is supposed by experts (a class of men who will

never leave anyone a little pleasant illusion) not to be a diamond at all. This would be a harrowing tale to tell to the possessor of an average-sized diamond pin, but it has left the Braganza stone pretty much where it was, the chance of selling it at the original valuation being so hopeless; and if it must remain for ever in its case in a triple iron safe it makes no difference to any mortal what it really is. It weighs twelve ounces, like a small paving-stone, but it is only a colourless topaz, say the experts, if anybody cares.

The undisputed diamond next in size is said to belong, or to have belonged, to a Malay Rajah of Mattan and was, we are told, valued by a certain Governor of Borneo, a man who clearly imagined vain things, at just "five hundred thousand dollars, two war-brigs fully equipped, a number of cannon, and a quantity of powder and shot." This, said the Governor, is exactly what the thing is worth, to within the fraction of a brig. Declining to spring another cannon, he offered this miscellaneous collection for it; but he did not get it, the Rajah happening also to be an imaginative man who believed that his diamond was worth far more because water in which it was dipped healed all diseases. Like many another dweller in cloudland this Rajah preferred to keep his jewel and his illusion connected with it; he cannot have put it to the test, and had no doubt a short way with experts in such matters.

Experts, in all branches and on all subjects, are the natural enemies of those who dwell in cloudland, and curiously enough even the most genuine optimists rather shrink from calling them in. The private owner of a small but select cabinet of Old Masters, picked up one by one, dirt cheap, in small out of the way shops

in Soho or Tottenham Court Road, does not want to be told by a man whom he must believe that there are a few frauds among his treasures; the more so as an expert has an unlimited contempt for the credulous and imaginative man he meets in the exercise of his profession, on his own beat, so to say, and has a nasty way of showing it, too. "Oh yes, a Romney *has* been picked up for a couple of pounds, but that was by a man who knew a Romney when he saw one. What did you say you gave for this Romney? Seven-and-sixpence? Well, it may be worth it for what I know." Fancy a practical cooper looking in on Diogenes one day, tapping the cask in his knowing way: "These hoops are all loose, my man; the very first downpour you'll be swamped out of your eligible freehold, and where are you then?"

Ours is a practical and pushing age in which philosophy is of little account and a contented mind is discouraged as leading to stagnation. Nine men out of ten believe in their heart of hearts, if they can find time to think of such old history at all, that Diogenes was only content to live in his tub after having tried very hard and unsuccessfully to get more comfortable lodgings elsewhere. Philosophy as a make-shift, they would say, was probably as well known to the ancients as it is to us. But the tenth man, who believes in Diogenes and his teaching, who honestly takes his own geese to be swans, and increases his worldly possessions, not by struggling and fighting for them as the other nine are doing, but merely by allowing his imagination fair play and valuing what he possesses at double or treble what it would be worth to others less contented than he,—that man is probably the wisest and certainly the happiest of the ten.

MARCUS REED.

THE CHURCH IN THE METROPOLIS.

NEARLY sixteen years ago Professor Freeman contributed to these columns an essay concerning the status of cities and boroughs, which had been suggested by the grant of charters to Birmingham and Dundee.¹ In connection with the former some doubt had been felt, whether an English town, which was not the seat of a bishop, could have the rank of a city. Although all scruples have been removed entirely by the Order in Council constituting the Bishopric of Birmingham on January 12th of this year, still it may not be inopportune to recall briefly Freeman's reasons against the objection, and note later developments since the date of his article.

From very early times a town, which was of sufficient importance to be described as a city, was considered to be a suitable place for the see of a bishopric. But the legislation of Henry the Eighth, by which he sought to constitute a number of new bishoprics, embodied a reversal of that idea. The towns were first to have the bishopric placed in them and then to become cities. The Act thus furnished strong support to the contention that see-towns alone were entitled to be designated cities. Henry's scheme was only partially carried out, but Chester, Peterborough, Oxford, Gloucester, and Bristol, in which he founded bishoprics, have ever since been called cities. So it happened that in course of time the great commercial centres, which

grew up and attained importance in different parts of the country remained simply towns, while comparatively small places enjoyed the rank of a 'city on account of the presence of a bishop.

Henry's intentions, which expressed the mind of the reformers of the Church of England, remained little more than a pious aspiration. For three centuries nothing was done to strengthen the organisation of the Church by the division of dioceses in spite of the tremendous growth of population. It was not until a few months before the accession of Queen Victoria that the collegiate church of Ripon became the cathedral of a new diocese. The question whether the town was on that account entitled to be described as a city was not settled at once and caused some confusion. In 1865 the opportunity was taken, in passing an Act relating to the supply of gas in the town, to set all doubts at rest by inserting a clause that "From and after December 31st, 1865, the city, borough or place corporate of Ripon shall for all purposes be styled 'the city of Ripon' and shall have all such rank, liberties, privileges and immunities as are incident to a city." In the meantime the collegiate church of Manchester had also become the centre of a diocese in 1847. Uncertainty existed there also for a time and with awkward consequences, until the letters patent were granted on March 29th, 1853. Southwell, where the Bishop is established in a small village, is the only exception among the recent new dioceses to the rule of conferring the

¹ CITY AND BOROUGH. MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE, May, 1889.

rank of city upon the see-town. Letters patent were issued to St. Albans, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Wakefield within a short interval after the publication of the Orders in Council creating the new dioceses.

It was a few months after the last-named was formed in 1888 that a charter was granted to Birmingham, which, after many vicissitudes, has now obtained a bishop. Leeds and Sheffield received their charters in 1893, and Bradford and Kingston-upon-Hull in 1897; but these great cities of the north do not seem in a hurry to put the finishing touch to their dignity. Sheffield and Hull merely afford titles for suffragans to the Archbishop of York. Financial and legislative difficulties in forming new dioceses have led to an extensive use of suffragan bishops. The result is a series of patchwork arrangements without any guiding principle.

The Metropolis was constituted into a separate county by the Local Government Act of 1888, but its size prohibits the application of the principle that dioceses should follow counties. By the London Government Act of 1899 a number of bodies differing from anything previously in existence were created, and introduced a certain amount of order "into the hopeless London mess," as Freeman once described the municipal organisation of the Metropolis. The City of London retains its independence and ancient prestige, undiminished by the twenty-eight new metropolitan boroughs which surround it on all sides. But even among them there is one of which the status differs but slightly from that of the City. Westminster was the seat of one of the bishoprics constituted by Henry the Eighth, and was accordingly created a city. Although the bishopric was dissolved after a few months, its existence was sufficient to justify the claim "once

a city, always a city." Accordingly after the passing of the Act in 1899 the Crown confirmed Westminster in its ancient rank. Why, since the Chapter of Westminster has for some time included a bishop, the opportunity has not been taken to revive the Bishopric of Westminster, is one of those ecclesiastical puzzles which are insoluble to the lay mind. On a somewhat lower plane will be the borough of Southwark, which, following the placing of a bishop's seat in the collegiate church will no doubt be made a city. The present metropolitan borough of Southwark includes the old parish of Newington in addition to the ancient borough, which has had a complicated history. Until the year 1327 it possessed a separate Corporation. But then the City of London obtained a grant by which the Lord Mayor was constituted Bailiff of Southwark. This arrangement did not last for long, and the borough again became independent, but the City regained control in 1550. From that time it has always maintained some connection with the City, though the terms of the relationship have constantly varied until, at the present time, it is mainly of a financial character.

It has been claimed that the constitution of the new diocese of Southwark will be the most important piece of Church organisation carried out in the Metropolis for a thousand years. The claim suggests the question whether the existing arrangements are commensurate with the importance of the Metropolis of the British Empire? Ecclesiastical historians tell us that only an accident prevented an archbishopric from being established in London at the outset. Certainly there is good reason for the contention that the formation of the Metropolis into a separate ecclesiastical province is the only arrangement which at all

corresponds with its size and unique position in the world.

Seventy years ago the principle that London should be dealt with as one homogeneous whole was recognised by the Ecclesiastical Commission, which made an extensive re-arrangement of diocesan boundaries. It had been urged strongly by Lord Henley in his plan of Church reform. The Commissioners stated in their report that, in arranging the diocese of London, their great object had been to bring the Metropolis and the suburban parishes under the jurisdiction of the same bishop. Accordingly they fixed the boundaries of the diocese to correspond with the area defined by the Central Criminal Court Act of 1834. For the South London portion it was necessary to take districts from the dioceses of Winchester and Rochester, besides several parishes under the peculiar jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. These recommendations were not carried out until some years later. Another Royal Commission, which reported in 1855, proposed the formation of a diocese of Westminster, but it was naturally felt undesirable to sever any portion of the Metropolis. The objection would not be valid if the diocese of Westminster were one among several bound together in the province of London. But it should have prevented the severance of the South London parishes in order to carry out the arrangement which, for the last quarter of a century, has outraged all geographical and historical considerations by attaching them to the diocese of Rochester.

It is only within the last few years that South London has obtained recognition as a component part of the Metropolis. The history of that area furnishes one prolonged record of neglect and ill-treatment. During the Middle Ages it was, as one may say,

the rubbish-heap of the Metropolis. Anything not required on the north bank of the Thames was obliged to take refuge on the south, whether it were butchers' slaughterhouses, disreputable amusements, or tenements for the poorest classes. Even the association of Shakespeare with Southwark, if it ever existed, must have been due largely to the fact that the play-actors were expelled from the jurisdiction of the City. Then came a time when evil-smelling factories found it to be a convenient situation, and some of them still remain in Southwark and Bermondsey. With the nineteenth century began that great increase of population which still continues with almost unabated rapidity. The estate in Walworth, for example, which is now being rebuilt by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, was laid out at the beginning of the century with instructions to the lessee to cover the ground with houses as quickly as possible. In the course of years the inner districts have been so filled up that it seems impossible in some parts for more people to be crowded upon the land. The older residents take their flight outwards to the vacant spaces around the metropolitan boundary. Every day the majority of the people stream forth from their homes to work in the central parts, so that South London has been well described as the dormitory of the Metropolis.

In all departments of life recognition is being accorded in an increasing degree to the fact that the area of the county of London is the natural one for administrative purposes. The Education Act of 1903, and the Guildhall Committee to deal with the Unemployed problem, may be mentioned as recent illustrations of the policy in its application to matters of primary

importance to the people of London. Why then should not the organisation of the Church be placed upon the same basis? Circumstances have compelled its recognition as regards the Church's share in education by the appointment of a committee by the Bishops of London and Rochester to act over the whole area; but there appears to be considerable hesitation in giving a hearing even to plans for its thorough and practical application.

At present the plan of organisation on the north bank of the Thames is an entirely voluntary one made between the Bishop and his three suffragans. It is beyond the present purpose to consider its effect from the churchman's point of view as regards its suitability for the working of the Church, though considerable doubt seems to be felt upon that point. To the plain man it is a constant source of confusion that the bishop, who is called the Bishop of London, has no concern whatever with nearly two millions of the people who live in London. If, further, a man has any regard for historical considerations as to the position of a bishop in past ages of the Church, he is at a loss to find any situation corresponding to that of the Bishop of London, who pretends to oversee nearly four million people. As a matter of fact he divides the greater part of his duties among the suffragans by allotting to them separate districts, so that they have a quasi-territorial jurisdiction. Actually, therefore, though not nominally, the Bishop of London, as regards the Metropolis on the north bank of the river, holds the position of an Archbishop. When

Londoners can release themselves from the fetters of prejudice it may be possible to effect an arrangement which shall be guided by some sound principle and do justice to South London. In the meantime the formation of the diocese of Southwark will be certainly a step in the right direction. Until the people of West, North and East London are prepared to recognise the South as one of themselves, it is inevitable that the extra-metropolitan portion of Surrey to be attached to the new diocese should be looked to for the sympathy and assistance which may be expected from those who dwell in more favoured surroundings.

There is, of course, the further question as to the sub-division of the Metropolis when it has become an ecclesiastical province. It is clear that the boundaries of the dioceses must follow those of the boroughs, though at present public opinion is so ill-informed on the subject that the suggestion of a bishop for each of the twenty-eight would be regarded as a subject for ridicule. Under present circumstances that would be as much at one extreme as the existing arrangement is at the other. It is quite certain that one bishop among about nine hundred thousand people, which is the present proportion, is ridiculous. But whatever may be the desirable sub-division it is necessary first to obtain recognition of the fact that the county of London containing twenty-eight boroughs should be one area for ecclesiastical as much as for other purposes for the well-being of the people.

C. E. A. B.

THE PUNKAH-WALLAH.

IN England they look upon India as the birthplace and home of Romance ; they talk of the glamour of the gorgeous East, and, wrapped in the cloudy atmosphere of the North, fondly picture to themselves an Orient of sunshine and mystery, where nothing is what it seems, and in everything lies more than meets the eye. But they are wrong, hopelessly wrong. The East is the home of Truth unveiled and unashamed. She sits in the market-place in the full glare of noon, and men pass her without even a sidelong glint of the eye ; and Destiny writes for every man his doom daily in league-long letters across the morning sky. He cannot choose but read. Consider yonder potter trudging wearily along the high road that runs in front of this apology for a barn, called a bungalow. I observe him from the verandah. His wife, child on hip, and household gods in a well poised basket, jingles along meekly in his wake. The man is a potter ; his personality is summed and exhausted in so many words. His forefathers must have made pots for untold generations back, and his sons will pound the clay so long as his seed endureth upon earth. He is a potter from and to all time. I know he is a potter for the same reason that the Sicilian poet's friends on their country walk recognised the tuneful Lycidas to be a goatherd, namely, because he looked exceedingly like a goatherd. It is even thus that I recognise that potter. He cannot possibly be a prince in disguise, or a Dalai Lama flying from the wrath to come, or anything other

than that which he seems at first sight.

There is no romance in the East, no concealment, no mystery. So I mused but a short month ago for the hundredth time. I know better now.

The day had died in a typical hot weather sunset smouldering in the West. I lay in a long chair, and thought of daffodils and soft meadow flowers, cloudy April mornings, and the white may lying in drifts over the green plain between Islip and Iffley. Flying foxes, singly and in dark companies, floated like lost souls out of the flaming sky, and, wheeling, settled to feed among the fruit trees of my compound.

The air was breathless. But no,—a dust-devil on the white road was making strenuous efforts to be born. At first, one saw only a tiny focus of whirling dust, a gyration as it were, immaterial, and absolute, a spinning zephyr, now failing, now waxing again ; then, more sand and a lazy leaf or two were snatched into service ; and lo, the thing had form and had begun to dance. To and fro it swayed and pirouetted and gained in power and stature from moment to moment, no devil as yet, but rather a lissome slave dancing at the bidding of her master. She swept off the road through a gap in the dusty mangoes ; her feet touched the open country and the sand of the bare desert, and in a twinkling she became a roaring fiend, her head in the clouds and her feet tearing the panting earth. A hapless young azalea tree is touched, stripped naked, and wrecked. Then the invisible lord of

sand-storms and Djinns gave the order and the dance suddenly ceased. Leaves and twigs dropped dead from where they had whirled in the high heaven, and silence fell once more, the silence of the Indian hot months.

The man that pulled the punkah from behind my chair was evidently fast asleep. The uneven tugs at the cord told as much. Something held me back from waking him for sleep was in the drowsy air. There was a shuffle in the dust outside and the sound of tired feet slipping from travel-worn shoes that clung to the sole and dropped tardily. Then I became aware of a female figure advancing softly across the front of the house. A pair of eagle eyes, felt rather than seen, probed the gloom of the verandah until they rested on the limp Englishman in the long chair. The owner of the eyes paused as if in hesitation, craned a skinny neck this way and that, finally, stepped forward with a salutation and sat down on the stone plinth at my feet.

We looked at one another. A striped squirrel slid down the verandah pillar, against which the seated woman leaned, and progressed in jerks towards the latest fallen crimson blossom of the Gold Mohur tree at my gate. The treasure seized, one heard the sound of nibbling across the dusk. Calmly my visitor stared at me, and leisurely after the fashion of the East I contemplated her. She wore a short green jacket and an accordion-pleated skirt of dull red: she might be any age between thirty and fifty; but of one thing there could be no doubt: she came from Rajputana. The proud set of the head, the swinging gait, the action of the hips in walking, all proclaim the Rajput and are foreign to our doughy beauties of the South. As for her face, breeding and character marked

every feature. She must have been very handsome in her youth, but somehow the contemplation of her present expression made one pity her husband.

The punkah ceased to oscillate, and snores, furtive at first but rising to a shameless pitch of resonance, came from behind my chair. The syrupy air, warm and thick with odours, seemed to pour into the verandah with deliberate intent to stifle. Then the woman spoke, and at the sound of her voice the snores died in a choke and the punkah began to move with the energy of repentance.

"Presence," she said, "I am a poor old woman, whose home is far from here, for as you may see from my dress [here she spread out the pleats of her faded skirt], I do not belong to this country but to another country." She paused and I felt the gimlet eyes watching for the effect her words might produce.

"I see," said I, "I am not blind nor am I an idiot. But how is it that a lady of noble family and one so highly educated [she had spoken in the purest Persian-Urdu] is tramping the world like a beggar, without attendants and having abandoned all modesty. This is matter for wonder."

She laughed, showing magnificent teeth in the shadow. "That," she said, "is my affair, oh, my son!"

The downright brutality of this answer was disconcerting. I had used towards her the honorific form of address. She had replied in the mode of speech suitable, according to the grammars, to intercourse between parents and children, masters and servants, and jailors or judges and criminals. Englishmen in the East are not accustomed to this mood. Also I myself am a judge.

The cultured voice continued, with a sudden and insulting return to the language of courts and ceremony.

"Lofty Portico of Justice, let it not be thought that this female slave is come on an idle errand, to thrust a written petition before the eyes of the Presence or weary him with chit-chat in the twilight. I come to tell a story, ay, and bringing news."

The little demon of quotation prompted me.

"O nightingale! bring me tidings of the Spring,"

I sang. She took me up with alacrity and completed the couplet, mouthing the Persian vowels with a confidence that only a sound classical education could have afforded.

"But as for evil news, let the Owl bear it away."

It was true then that *Purda-nishin* ladies lightened the long *Zenana* days with study of *Hafiz* the graceful and *Sa'adi* the almost divine.

"I rejoice," she said, "in that my happy star has led me to the abode of the Presence, who is evidently a youth of superior attainments, a very *Joseph*, not one to drive the widow from his gates, but rather such a one as, having heard her tale patiently, will dismiss her with a gift. Listen, then, to the story of an ungrateful son of mine."

"Lady," said I, "ungrateful sons are many and all alike. What have I to do with your son?"

"Even this," answered she readily. "The Presence had a mother and doubtless at times forgets her. Then would my son be, as it were, kin to the Presence, since the wise have well said,

—Kind fly with kind

Pigeon with pigeon, hawk with hawk.

Who knows but that even now the halls of the Presence shelter my son?"

It was too hot to argue, too hot even to call for an iced drink, in short, it remained only to close one's eyes and submit. It occurred to me that the *punkah-man* was pulling steadily and with more than usual regularity and finish.

"Know, then, that we people come of a respectable *Rajput* clan, and that a nephew of mine is *Police Inspector* in the service of the *Sircar*. As for me, I am a widow; three villages I own in fee simple, and I have an only son. The Presence is ignorant of marriage customs among us *Rajputs*, but he will understand that the boys of my family marry with none but the girls of a certain other family, for such is the rule among us. Now of that other family remains but one girl, and my son is the last marriageable male of my clan. It is, therefore ordained by the gods, and very necessary, that these two should marry, otherwise, our line will be as extinct as the *Phoenix*."

She settled her back against the verandah pillar and an eaves-dropping squirrel fled in sudden panic among the rotten rafters. I grunted assent to her views.

"Destiny," she continued, "had marked my son for advancement. He was a diamond among sons. He went to the *Mission-i-School*, and the *Padre Sahib* commended his virtue and industry. For his maps painted in vermilion and indigo he won a reward. The science of numbers he knew to perfection, so that he would often confound his teachers by his questions as well as by his answers. As to his beauty—"

Over his head, by reason of his intelligence
The star of pre-eminence was shining."

I had been trapped into a second quotation. The old woman snapped

her fingers as mothers do when the foolish or malicious praise their children in their presence.

"So the time came when he must marry the only daughter of the other branch of the Rajputs. Now it seems to me that the Padre Sahib in the Mission-i-School had induced a devil to enter into my son, then a stripling of fifteen but well grown, for when the week of weddings came round, my son fled to the jungles and refused to enter into my son, then a stripling of fifteen but well grown, for when the week of weddings came round, my son fled to the jungles and refused to come home. Then there was contention between him and his family for many a month, and though we put drugs into his food, that, having stupefied him, we might marry him willy-nilly, yet he would vomit these up again and then rage like a must elephant. He said 'I am a grown man and will marry whom I please.'"

"Oh abominable!" I groaned. The conduct of this unruly son was really most unconscionable.

"Yet in those days he lingered about the village, the companion of outcasts, it is true, but still under my eye, and I hoped, for we mothers are a sanguine race. But not long ago he disappeared, and the manner of his going I will now relate to the Presence.

"There lived in a neighbouring village a Thakur, addicted beyond measure to hunting. Many deer and swine had this Thakur killed, and bears also and leopards not a few, but the desire of his heart was to slay a tiger, for he would often boast of an evening, sitting among the lads upon the village assembly-place, that if God sent a tiger across his path, he would surely bring the skin home, and feast all the village from sweeper to Brahmin without favour. One day this windbag saw my son in the fields and would sharpen his wit upon him, being aware, as was the whole country side, of the youth's disinclination to marry. 'Oh such and

such a one,' he shouted,—I cannot, in the holy ear of the Presence, repeat his words. My son heard, but made no reply. Ingrate though he be, even in his madness he was never a fool. Not long after the Thakur Sahib made great feasting over the betrothal of his daughter to a neighbouring Thakur. A hundred Brahmins he fed within his house, and men of other castes feasted in scores, caste by caste, sitting in rows along the verandahs and in the courtyards, and extolling the liberality of the Thakur Sahib. Then my son took a calf of the sacred village kine and painted it in turmeric and black and scarlet to resemble a tiger. Observe Presence! his science of painting maps in the school had turned his heart to mischief and sacrilege. In the dark of the night after the third day of the feasting, he tied the coloured calf to a tree upon the village boundary. Then, when all were merry within, he sent a worthless man to rouse the Thakur crying out: 'A tiger has come; oh master, save us and our cattle!' My son had previously gone round the village byres scaring the cattle by howling like a wolf, until they lowed and broke loose in terror. The Thakur Sahib called for his gun and, attended by a great concourse, went forth to slay the tiger. He saw the painted calf, and the feet of his intelligence were caught in the snare, so that he slew the sacred animal, firing not once nor twice, but until all his ammunition was spent. Then when the Brahmins, his guests, saw that he was polluted, they went away from his presence silently and would feast no more with him, and the low-caste men laughed immoderately at him, and the father of the bridegroom took his son home. So the Thakur Sahib's face was blackened; and being outcasted he prayed the holy men to hasten to fix

the fine that would make him clean again. To make a long story short, he paid them seven hundred rupees so that the latter feasting was even greater than the former. But it was an angry host that paid the score, and he swore, holding the tail of the sacred cow, that, if he caught my son, he would have him flayed alive, law or no law. And since that day no one has looked on the face of my son,—an arrant rogue, an unlucky accursed child, a limb of the evil one."

The storm of her indignation swept me along. "A hard-baked, twice-cooked knave," I echoed; "a shameless son of shame, one better dead than alive, without hope of emendation, a consorter with vagabonds, wholly damned."

When we two had finished abusing her son, a silence fell between us. Then the old lady rose upon her feet, a commanding figure in the gloom. "Sahib," said she, "were I to find my son to-night, what punishment, think you, would his villany merit?"

I thought until my head began to swim. It was hard to fit this crime to the Procrustean bed of the Indian Penal Code. "He must go home with his mother," I answered lamely.

At that instant the punkah came to an abrupt full stop; the punkah man sprang to his feet and seizing my knees, crouched, an abject figure between the projecting arms of the long chair. He lifted up his face to mine, and even in the dim light I could see his features working pitifully. Then in a high-pitched croak the words burst from his throat and—was I dreaming?—he spoke in English. "Sir," he said, "Honour! Lord! let me stay. 'To err is human to forgive divine,' Poet Pope,—Mission School,—study English three years,—all forgot,—all forgot!"

The croak ended in a queer sort

of sob, but now the man was pouring out a torrent of supplication in the vernacular. Let the old woman his mother be sent away: he would stay and serve me faithfully as clerk, orderly, anything, all his life; but go back with her he would not. Exhausted by his vehemence he stood up and threw a despairing glance around. The lamps were lit in the dining-room behind us and all the doors open. A semicircle of servants cut off retreat through the bungalow. Silently they had mustered, and in silence they stood from dog-boy to butler in a serried line across both doorways, to see the game at bay, doubtless. There was no hope in that quarter. In front, the old woman stood in a patch of lamp-light, her eyes ablaze and her face quivering with the excitement of victory. You may see such a look on a Persian hound when for a brief moment he faces the breathless jackal before leaping in to make an end of the hunted creature.

A bullock-cart with jangling bells was approaching along the high road. In and out through the dusty mangoes the white loose-limbed bullocks came on at a swinging trot, and were brought to a halt opposite the gate of the compound. It was very dark, but there was light enough to mark the high shoulders and stag-like heads of the thorough-bred Gujeráti cattle under the yoke, as they tossed their milky necks till the copper bells filled the evening with noise.

The strategy of the old lady filled me with admiration. A Napoleon in an accordion-pleated skirt, she had planned out her campaign even down to the details of transport, and forced events to move in strict conformity with a prearranged programme. "Come, my son," she said "it is the will of the Presence." But the youth stirred not a limb in response.

Perhaps, thought I, a little bluster may move him, so I descanted in angry tones on the preposterous idea of remaining a bachelor, on the impiety of deferring the begetting of a son (who alone can save a Hindu's soul from hell), and on the advantages of married life. But the youth, without turning his head, merely asked, why, all this being so, the Presence himself had not taken a wife.

"My son," said the old lady, "thine own trotting bullocks wait for thee, even Ganesh and Shiva, thy darlings."

He turned a yearning gaze at the beautiful creatures glimmering at the compound gate. "But," he argued, "if I go home the Thakur Sahib will either have me slain or ruin me in a court of law. I cannot go."

His mother laughed loudly. "Not so, my diamond. Thine own cousin is now Inspector at the Police Thana. Blood holds by blood, and what can the cow-killing Thakur do? Besides, it is known to me that he keeps four guns while his licence is only endorsed for two, and for this there is a heavy fine before the Judge Sahib. Will the Thakur risk losing guns, licence, rupees, and honour all at once?

Come; I myself have packed thy bundle while thou wert pulling the fan for the Presence ere the sound of thy mother's voice roused thee from sleep."

The truant son heaved a deep sigh. He stepped off the verandah and stooped at his mother's feet until his forehead touched the dust. "I am coming," he said.

An attendant (it was not one of my household) appeared with a bundle in his hand. Mother, son, and servant moved silently away to the gate, and ascended the ponderous family cart. The driver gave the hollow click of the tongue that all bullocks know, and soon the sound of bells had died away in the darkness.

"Karim," said I to my bearer at dinner, "who is this new punkah-wallah behind my chair?" Karim answered that it was a poor relation of the dog-boy's who had hitherto held the (honorary) post of scullion in the Presence's kitchen.

"Are you sure you are speaking the truth?" I said.

With some surprise he affirmed that the case was as he had related; but I have my doubts.

C. P.

KURDS AND CHRISTIANS.

OF late years the Kurd has more than once made his appearance in the newspapers of Europe; but such reports tell us little of his manners and customs, except that he has a habit of killing Armenians, and some readers of them may be curious to know how this stage-villain occupies his time, when not professionally engaged. They will scarcely be able to gratify their curiosity by means of personal observation, for it is unlikely that Kurdistan will for the present be included in the range of the most enterprising organiser of world-travel, and they may therefore be willing to have the report of a traveller who has spent some months on the outskirts of Kurdistan and seen something of the Kurds themselves, and a good deal of their neighbours and hereditary foes. Besides the Armenians the Kurd has Christian neighbours of another and less known race, the Nestorian Syrians, who live in several districts of the Kurdish mountains, both on the Turkish and the Persian side. From these, and from one or two Europeans resident among them, and from personal observation the materials for this paper have been derived. The Syrian informants came from all parts of the mountains; the personal observation was limited to the district of Azerbaijan, the Persian province to the east of the Kurdish mountains, and to some outlying parts of the mountains themselves. As its title implies, the paper deals not so much with the Kurd himself as with his relations to his Christian neighbours.

In all regions adjacent to his own the Kurd is without doubt the most conspicuous feature of the landscape. He and his doings, though in themselves not often interesting or original, have such a direct bearing on the life of his neighbours that he is seldom long out of mind, and few conversations pass without some reference to him. For his variety is almost as infinite as that of the English climate, though, like it, he is only variously bad, and as his vagaries import life and death, and not merely comfort and discomfort, they have an interest for anyone who minds dying. Nor is he so impartial as the sky. It is true that he makes no difference between the just and the unjust, but if he has any Christian neighbours, he usually prefers to visit them rather than Mussulmans. This is not from any religious scruple. Being a Sunni, he naturally dislikes the Persian, who is a Shiah, and despises him rather more than the Syrian Christian, as being a greater stranger and a worse fighting man. His preference for Syrian loot comes from prudence, for he knows that any little violence done to Christians will not greatly distress the Persian Government and will commend him to the Turk. He is not in great fear of either, but thinks it foolish to run unnecessary risks. When he can rob a Christian and get thanks for it, it would be quixotic to rob a Mussulman and risk unpleasantness. But he is not pedantic. When there is any good reason, such as a feud or a tempting chance of plunder, he does not spare the Mussulman. Several Mussulmans

were robbed or killed last year upon the high-roads of Azerbaijan, and on the Turkish side Sheikh Sadiq of Shamdinan was waging a little war with Turkish troops, doubtless for some good end. Nor does Kurd spare his brother Kurd; feuds are so plentiful that it is difficult to hold an army of Kurds together long before they begin to plunder one another.

Thus the Kurd's preference for Christians is evidently due not so much to prejudice as to convenience. Yet it is marked enough to make his doings even more interesting to them than to his other neighbours. To the Mussulman he is only one of the unpleasant possibilities of life, but to the Syrian in many districts he is a constant and pressing danger. The Kurd, seen or unseen, is the permanent background of the picture. He and the physical landscape together dominate feeling, and the latter without him would look quite different. What by itself would be only a barren valley sprinkled with rocks, and rather bad going for your horse, loses much of its dulness when you look behind each rock for a possible Kurd. It is long odds that you do not find him, but still the possibility diminishes *ennui*.

From this point of view the traveller has much reason to be grateful to the Kurd, and even the native whom he raids gains something by his presence. No doubt familiarity blunts all sensations, but still the constant possibility of being robbed, ruined, or killed must tend to stimulate existence. My acquaintance with the Syriac language is incomplete, but I have not discovered in it any equivalent for "being bored." And in a more serious way the Syrian owes something to the proximity of the Kurd. To carry one's life in one's hand is a wonderful preservative against vulgarity and other ignoble

faults. Some forms at least of cant and self-deception are blown away by the presence of danger.

The advantages of having a dangerous neighbour are very clearly illustrated by the difference between the Syrians of the plains, who are little molested by Kurds, and those of the mountain. The difference is such that the doubt will rise in the mind which is the better state, the comparative comfort and security of the plain or the bitter hardship and danger of the mountain. It seems brutal to ask the question, especially if one knows and cares for the hard-pressed mountaineer; but it will be asked, for there can be no doubt which conditions breed the nobler race. Push it to an extreme; suppose that the mountain stock is at last exterminated, as it very well may be, and that the others survive and thrive; still the doubt is not quashed. If it is better for a man to die nobly than to live and degenerate, is it obvious that it is better for a race to survive at all costs? If the mountain Syrians should come to this, the race would end with honour, though their fame would not be widely spread, and with all their faults they would be as much martyrs as many in the Calendar, for it is always open to them to obtain such security as the country affords by turning Mussulman and being merged in the Kurds. As much may be said of those who are killed now, for the Kurds are glad to welcome a man who will turn Mussulman and come over to them. The claim may seem exaggerated, for Syrians who die fighting Kurds have not much likeness to the martyrs of the *Acta Sanctorum*. The persecution, as we have seen, is only religious in an indirect way; and in any given case the Syrian probably feels himself to be fighting for his hearth rather than for his faith; though he is

still far from forgetting that he is a Christian fighting against infidels. But in a larger view he has some claim to be called a martyr. When one considers the century-long pressure of such perilous conditions, and the perpetual temptation to purchase security by turning Mussulman, the constancy of the Syrians is astounding. And it is genuine loyalty to their faith which has kept them Christians. In many districts they have become assimilated to the Kurds in dress and manners, and often mix with them pretty freely in quiet times. Every man can speak Kurdish, sings Kurdish songs, and uses Kurdish words in conversation. There is no antipathy between the races strong enough to keep them apart, if the religious motive were wanting. In certain parts of Turkey indeed they lived almost amicably a few years ago, before the customary divisions of the country were abolished by the Turkish Government and the Armenian massacres made the persecution of Christians a habit. Even now one is often struck by the familiarity which exists between the two races, and the ready way in which a Syrian will do justice to the good qualities of any individual Kurd. In spite of bloodshed the Kurd is to the Syrian, not an alien, or a monster, but a neighbour and a man very much like himself; not perhaps to be much loved or trusted, but perfectly intelligible.

The relations between the two races vary very greatly in different districts; for there is much diversity of character and habits between the several tribes of Kurds. In the first place there is the distinction between nomadic and settled tribes. There is a popular impression that all Kurds are nomads, but this is incorrect. Certain tribes are regularly nomadic, and wander with their herds far into

Asia Minor and into some parts of Persia; but the rest, and the greater number, have settled homes. They are only nomadic in so far as they go up into the mountains with their flocks during the summer and live in tents. But the Syrians in the mountains do so no less. Of these two kinds the nomadic Kurds have the worse reputation for robbery, as is natural, but even the settled Kurds vary not a little both in character and appearance. A Syrian will draw distinctions between them, and each tribe seems to have its peculiar reputation. There are probably not more than one or two Europeans who have any real knowledge of the characters of the different tribes, though I believe that some enthusiasts from Germany have visited the country to study it ethnologically and philologically. But such visitors can only gather stray marks of distinction. Thus I learnt in one place (the plain of Solduz to the south of lake Urmi, where there are many Kurdish and a few Syrian villages close together) that the Kurds there were addicted to burglary, a form of theft lower in the scale than the customary raid, and that they are dangerous when disturbed in their occupation; so much so that the people of the village where I slept, though very poor, had clubbed together to maintain two armed watchmen. As a special attention these were posted for the night on the roof above my head. This was more to my honour than comfort, for the sight of them drew the village dogs round the house and kept them barking till dawn, banishing the sleep earned by a ten hours' ride. Moreover the said guards appeared in the morning to suggest a requital of their services.

A little while before some of these burglarious Kurds had broken, or rather climbed, into the house of a

village *agha* to steal his cattle. They were able to proceed at leisure, for one of them was posted on the roof to command the exit from the house, but unhappily they could not open the gate of the yard or break it down, for the place is almost a castle and the outer gate is strong. Not to be balked, they hauled up the cows on to the roof by means of buffalo chains and let them down outside. Then they tried to hoist the buffaloes themselves, but found them too heavy, and so went off with the cows alone. It is reported that the *agha* who was robbed was so gratified by the perseverance of the thieves that he offered a reward of fifty tomauns, and exemption from punishment if they would come to claim it. The thieves evidently thought the offer deceitful, for they did not come.

The Kurds of this district are much despised by those of other parts and despise them in turn. Their villages are miserably poor and they are said to be more than usually oppressed by their *aghas*. At the time I reached the place, in May, they were preparing to start for the summer pastures and the plain was full of the black tents which figure in all stories of Kurds, and the roads were blocked with sheep and lambs.

Only a day's ride from this place, in the district of *Sajbulak*, one comes to Kurds of quite another stamp. They are not only unlike the last-mentioned, but unlike all current notions of what a Kurd should be. They live, or a great part of them, in a town, and for this neighbourhood the town is large and prosperous, and the inhabitants look well-to-do. Both the town and its people remain in my memory as one of the pleasantest sights of all that country.

I was told that these Kurds of *Sajbulak* were "more noble" than

those of other districts, and their looks confirmed the report. Kurds, for all their formidable reputation, have usually much more the look of an oppressed than of an oppressing race. Only the *aghas* break this rule, and that justifies the impression; for it is reported that they do oppress their people grievously, so that the ferocious Kurd, like the henpecked bully, has a hard life at home. And their appearance corresponds with their life. The type is not prepossessing. The features are usually pinched, the moustache thin, the lower part of the face too small, and the chin in many cases retreating; often the nose too is defective. As one sees them coming down from the mountains to do their marketing, they often look peculiarly poverty-stricken, dejected, and shabby. Patches and rags are too common in Persia to excite attention, but there is something in the air of the Kurd which makes his shabbiness more felt. The habit of tying a handkerchief over the head and under the chin to keep off the cold, which is common to both Kurds and Syrians, is unfavourable to martial dignity. Kurds when travelling, are nearly always armed with rifles, but their carriage does not suggest the swash-buckler; they have a furtive, uneasy look, rather than a swagger. There is that in their faces which suggests that it is better not to meet them on a dark night, but in the open they do not inspire fear. Their cattle are like them, for they too look very hungry and depressed, as they go limping along under sacks of corn and hay, or hung round with wooden chests and domestic utensils for their master's house. As a rule the Kurds on such occasions travel in parties, some on foot and some mounted, and even when there are only two, they almost always prefer to ride and tie. They do this for

tactical reasons, in order that, if attacked, they may have the advantage both of cavalry and infantry.

Of course an agha and his followers present a very different appearance both in dress and features, but such is the appearance of an ordinary Kurd.

In Sajbulak, however, the type is different. The men as a rule are better looking, better dressed, and of a bolder carriage. The cast of face is similar, but their features are less pinched and their expressions more open. The men are often decidedly handsome, and the children are beautiful and winsome. Kurds in general are as fair-complexioned as Europeans, and these were conspicuously fair. Their hair, however, is usually dark, but I have been told that there is a tribe of Kurds elsewhere who are fair-haired. The trait most common and noteworthy after those already mentioned is the form of the eyebrows, not heavy but clearly marked and conspicuously arched. This gives something feminine to the faces of the younger men.

The costume of this district, and also of Solduz, is peculiar. The men's trousers are only divided up to the knee, in some cases not so high, and to make walking possible they are proportionately loose. Even so they produce a very short step, but they are said to be comfortable for riding and that is of more moment, as the country is famous for horses and the local nobles pride themselves on their studs. In the evening all horses are taken down to the river outside the city for a bath. There is a flat and open, though stony, space between the wall and the stream, and here the owners or the grooms gallop their horses and show them off before they enter the water; and the connoisseurs saunter out to watch. I did not see any of the finest studs, but there

were some handsome horses there; it was humiliating to see my own poor travel-worn beasts brought down in their turn, and I was rather glad to know no Kurdish.

The rest of the male dress here differs little in shape from that of other Kurds, except that most men wore a kind of quilted shirt with horizontal stripes of different colours without the usual open waistcoat; but the dress generally was more gaily coloured and very much cleaner than elsewhere. For trousers white was the favourite colour, and it was usually clean; for the rest of the costume blue and bright yellow were the most popular, the latter especially for the children's dresses. Most of these wore loose shirts of flowered cotton of the boldest and brightest colours, but they were harmonious. To an eye accustomed to the faded and dingy, though picturesque, remnants which imperfectly clothe the Mussulman youth in the streets of Urmi and the neighbouring villages, these brightly clad children were a gladdening sight. Had one come straight from an English slum, they would have been too dazzling. Their manners, too, were much in contrast with those of English children, for they stood and looked gravely at the stranger without uttering a word. Their elders did likewise, and never even scowled upon us as the Mussulmans of many places do upon the infidel. It was altogether unlike one's home-formed expectation of the Kurdish town, and no less unlike the picture formed on experience elsewhere.

To find a Kurdish town at all, though there are others besides this, was a surprise; still more to find its inhabitants prosperous, and for that region orderly. And the town itself was at least as well-kept and built as most others in Azerbaijan. It

has a large bazaar, where, besides the ordinary commodities, are sold some local specialities; among them slippers and other objects of dyed leather, and ornamental saddle-cloths of a kind of carpet-work. The streets and houses are not much better than elsewhere, but the city has a wall and towers, which, though built only of sun-dried bricks (like most fortifications in Persia), are not too much decayed to make an imposing front on the slope of the hill which faces towards the river. And the place is finely situated; surrounded, but not closely shut in, by high hills, and itself lying round the slopes of a lower hill, on the summit of which is an open space used as a parade-ground, and having a goodly outlook over the city and the broad swift river flowing along one side between banks well-wooded for this part of Persia. The approach to the gate by which I entered was delightful and most unexpected. Crossing the river by a ford we entered a deep shady lane with high banks, topped on the one side by a hedge of roses and on the other by *sinjiya* trees. I never saw another lane in Persia so green and sheltered. And just then it was a refreshing sight, for the day was hot, and the road from Solduz lies over steep and unusually dry and stony hills, where even in May the scanty plants and grass were already brown, and a few birds, tortoises, and innumerable beetles were the only company.

It was pleasant to find that the inhabitants do not belie their prepossessing looks and the beauty of the place. My entertainer for the two nights I stayed there was a Syrian, educated by the American Mission, who now is engaged on an independent attempt to convert the Kurds to Christianity, supported by a very modest subsidy from a lady in Eng-

land. The attempt sounds hazardous, for there are no Europeans in the place, and very few Christians of any kind. But he told me that he did not think the danger great. The governors, who are appointed by the Central Government and usually come from other parts of Persia, have always been friendly to him and many of the Kurds themselves stand by him. His occupation is well known, and he has even held public disputation with the doctors of the Mussulmans. On one occasion, when he had been questioned by them about his faith, a part of his audience declared, "this man is an infidel and we ought to kill him," and for some time after others in the city were inclined to take the same view of their duty; but both in the assembly and outside many of the Kurds took his part, and he has hitherto escaped unmolested. Their action is remarkable, for it can scarcely have had any other motive but personal liking and humanity. If he were a European, they might have been swayed by prudence, but the death of a Syrian would make no great stir. The affair seems to show an unexpected liberality and tolerance in the Kurd, though it certainly would not have ended so in all parts of Kurdistan. It was still more noteworthy, perhaps, that some of his defenders were moved, if his account was correct, not merely by magnanimity, but by a genuine desire to discuss the matter fairly and let him do justice to his case. He avers that he has converted several Kurds of note, some of whom, including a sheikh, have openly professed Christianity, and others are secret converts. But it is perhaps less remarkable that he should have made a few conversions than that many Mussulmans should be willing to listen to him and genuinely curious to hear of his faith.

Yet in this the people of Sajbulak are not unique. I learned from another Syrian, who is engaged in similar work among the Mussulmans in Maragha, two days' ride from there, that they are even more friendly than the Kurds of Sajbulak. In Maragha the people are not Kurds, but of the same Turkish-speaking race as the other Mussulmans of the plain, and my informant, who like the first mentioned was my host, told me that they were not only tolerant towards him, but actually friendly, and that most people knew him by sight and saluted him in the street, as indeed I was witness. He also told me that the Mussulmans there were generally friendly to the Christians, Syrian and Armenian, and treated them fairly, whereas in Urmi and some other towns they have to submit to many small insults and annoyances. Among other things he said that in the bazaar here the Mussulmans actually sell as good things to Christians as to others and do not charge them more, which he evidently thought a mark of singular liberality. Moreover, it seems that he often holds friendly discussion with many Mussulmans of the best class, including one or two of the religious dignitaries, and that they are well disposed to listen. He mentioned others of the priests who were hostile, but they were a minority and he seemed not to fear them. He added a thing more surprising than any of the foregoing. He keeps for sale a stock of Gospels, and other parts of the Bible, in Turkish and Persian, and he said that from his sales he believed that most houses contained one or other of these publications.

This statement is startling, and very much conflicts with most reports of the attitude of Mussulmans towards Christianity. The state of things both at Sajbulak and Maragha must be ex-

ceptional, but it is well attested. The witnesses seemed thoroughly honest, and although this impression of their character will naturally not convince any one who asks for proof of a statement so unexpected, the nature of the assertion is the best evidence of its truth. It is hard to find any motive which could lead either witness to make it if it was false. If they wished to magnify themselves and to excite sympathy, they would naturally exaggerate the hostility of the Mussulmans and the danger to themselves. Zeal may have made them over sanguine, but this is an error to which Syrians are not prone, and it was not so much their hopes for the future (though they had them), as their accounts of the present, which were remarkable. Perhaps they felt a little harmless vanity in showing what they had achieved and how well they were received by Mussulmans of influence; but the very fact of their presence, though their employment is known, and their evident sense of security testify that their statements are true in the main. It was interesting and almost touching to notice in them a sort of local patriotism, an anxiety to do justice to the good qualities of the Mussulmans round them; and this is the more remarkable because neither of them were natives of the towns in which they live, but came from the district of Urmi; and they concurred in asserting the superiority of their present neighbours to the Mussulmans of their native place. This report, let me add, coincided with all I heard there.

Sajbulak is unfortunately rather the exception than the type; a unique oasis of Kurdish culture and enlightenment. And even so its enlightenment is not yet quite of a Western kind, though I heard that some of the Kurds there claim to be descended from the English;

a startling report, more interesting to the student of character than to the ethnologist. It is hard to say how they came by the notion, and I could not hear that they had any definite tradition of an immigration; nor is it likely that they have, for the time of their immigration must have been remote. No doubt the story springs from a desire to connect themselves with what they believe to be a great and warlike race. It is pleasant to find that the name of England is still respected in these lands, though her political influence has waned, and there is no doubt that Kurds, and, so far as I could see, Persians also, regard us with more respect than most European nations and attribute to us more manly qualities.

English prestige in Kurdistan owes something to a former British consul at Van, Major (then Captain) Maunsell. Some years ago, it is reported, he was attacked by Kurds; and his party, except one black *cavass* and the interpreter, both still attached to the consulate, fled at once. The latter was wounded at the beginning, but the consul kept the *cavass* beside him to load his spare rifle, and having put his helmet on one rock, lay down behind another and fired. When he had killed four of his assailants, the rest retired. This incident is not yet forgotten in Kurdistan, and has probably been of service to Englishmen travelling in the neighbourhood.

But Sajbulak, as has been said, is an oasis, and we must now turn back to a region where the Kurd appears in his more familiar rôle of robber and slayer of Christians. Most of the tribes in the mountains bordering on the plain of Urmi are not kindly neighbours either to the Syrian Christians who dwell among them, or to the Mussulmans of the plain. Their presence always makes travelling a

little unsafe, and during my short sojourn there several parties were waylaid and robbed, and some killed. As a rule these were mere acts of brigandage, such as may happen in many parts of Persia, and the perpetrators are not always Kurds. The thing most noteworthy is the smallness of the plunder which suffices to invite robbery. The people waylaid are often poor, and have nothing but their clothes and perhaps a few silver pieces; so much so that the word used for such robberies, in Syriac at least, means properly to *strip*, for it is the custom to strip the person robbed to his shirt, and let him go. If there is no resistance and no feud, the Kurd usually does no more than this, so that most natives who have travelled much about the mountains have undergone the process once or twice. Europeans are less often attacked, and as a rule they are handled still more gently. In some cases of which I heard, the Kurds stripped the servants, but either left their masters unmolested, or took from them their valuables without violence. In such circumstances a party surprised by Kurds sometimes does best to submit quietly, when resistance would be desperate.

But even the lives of Europeans are not always respected,¹ and to the native the experience is always dangerous, as one singular case will show. Two Mussulman camel-drivers were killed and their bodies left by the road, but the robbers took nothing but a few sacks from the backs of the camels, having poured the grain they contained into the road; and even the sacks were old. As the motive for robbery was so very minute, it was conjectured that the robbers had had some quarrel with

¹ An American missionary was killed and mutilated by Kurds last spring.

the camel-drivers who had passed that way last, and took their revenge on the next who came within reach. It appears that this kind of vicarious revenge is not unusual.

Another small robbery, which took place recently, illustrates local manners equally well. Two buffaloes loaded with raisins, the property of a well-known and prosperous Syrian, were carried off by Kurds. As the robbers were known, some men went up to the village of the small chief, a notorious bandit, by whose men they had been taken. The envoys recovered the buffaloes, but not the raisins, which had already been eaten. Probably the Kurds were unwilling to provoke the owner too far, as he was supposed to have influence with the English Mission, which represents to the Kurd the majesty of the English name, and keeps friendly relations with several of the Kurdish chiefs.

But the end of the story is more interesting. Shortly after, the chief in question with some dozen of his followers came down to the village of the owner of the buffaloes and requested of him hospitality for the night, which he was bound by custom to grant. They stayed for the night and were peaceable and very friendly. Their visit was not intended to add insult to injury, but to show that they bore no ill-will for what had passed, and wished to be agreeable.

This kind of precarious but not unfriendly intercourse represents the normal relation between Kurd and Syrian. There is mutual mistrust, but intercourse is frequent, and such incidents as this do not lead to permanent hostility or violent indignation. They are accepted as natural and customary, and when some sort of satisfaction has been given, a peace is patched up. For many purposes the services of Kurds are often employed by Syrians and Europeans. They

serve as letter-carriers, and as guides and escorts upon mountain journeys, chiefly because they can pass with less danger of attack and their presence is a protection against other Kurds of friendly tribes, though of course their usefulness may be curtailed by feuds. They are not always the most trustworthy of guides, and are quite ready to practise tricks and raise impediments in order to secure money. But experienced travellers are prepared for this, and trust themselves to them without much fear. Pertinacity and a bold face break down these obstacles, and more serious danger is not much to be apprehended, unless the country is unusually disturbed.

The inferior Kurd can sometimes be cowed. In one case an unarmed European, with only one servant, overcame a party of Kurds, who had come to rob him, with the aid of nothing but his whip and a harangue delivered through the mouth of his servant. His assailants were so overwhelmed that they were induced at last to kiss his hand and ask pardon. This he refused to grant, and subsequently appealed to the authorities and had them punished. It is fair to add that their submission was probably not due to mere cowardice, but to the power of English prestige and the fear of heavy punishment for violence done to a European. When complaint is pushed home by an energetic consul, a Turkish governor, if he has power to do so, will sometimes inflict punishment on offending Kurds. If the culprits are not to be caught, he will at least send soldiers to burn the nearest village. Sometimes, too, even Syrians, if they have influence enough, can obtain redress for robberies committed upon them; and raiders will be compelled to restore sheep or cattle. But this is not common, partly because the beasts

have usually been dispersed or eaten before they can be recovered, and still more from the weakness or unwillingness of the authorities. That in spite of these things so much can be done, goes to show that Kurds are less bold and less desperate than their reputation, and could probably be reduced to order with far less effort than the subjugation of the Caucasus cost Russia, or than the hill tribes of India are costing the Indian Government. The present British Consul at Van told me that the Kurd reminds him in habits and character of the Pathan, but seems inferior in courage, physique, and ferocity.

But their dangerous side is not fully represented by these petty and customary robberies. In times of feud they do mischief more serious than mere robbery, as I will presently show, and only their private dissensions prevent them from being more formidable than they are. When a chief arises able and energetic enough to make himself despotic and crush his rivals, he has little to fear from either the Turkish or the Persian government, and can oppress without control.

Such a chief is the present Sheikh Sadiq of Shamsdin (or Shamdinan), a district just over the Turkish frontier in the mountains south-west of Urmi. He is at present decidedly the most powerful and the most feared man in all the region near him, and even Europeans take some pains to avoid his country. The Turks could not crush him very easily, still less the Persians, but as a rule he avoids a serious breach with either. Like a wise Italian prince of the fifteenth century he strengthens himself and encroaches where he can, and sometimes impudently, but he avoids unprofitable quarrels. A brush now and then with Turkish troops cannot be avoided, but he knows how to

escape a serious war. He is reported, and the report is too probable to be false, to have agents at Stamboul, who satisfy the Porte of his good intentions by the most natural means.

He plays off his neighbours against one another. In 1903, as he had on his hands an affair with the Turks and did not wish for trouble at home, he was for the time most friendly to his Syrian subjects. A few years ago, affairs being in a different state, he had one of their bishops murdered and mutilated with his nine companions. He has seized the land of a second and expelled him from the country by giving stringent orders for his death. A third, the Metropolitan, he keeps by him as a useful agent, and compels him to indite letters at his dictation, after the manner of the old-fashioned school-master, to say how happy he is. This is convenient in many ways. It enables him to meet any complaints against his treatment of Christians by producing the unimpeachable testimony of their own bishop, to make profit of any influence which the said bishop possesses, and to hold treasonable communications without incriminating himself. In the winter of 1902-3 a letter signed by the Metropolitan was brought to the Russian Mission in Urmi, professing the desire of the bishop and his flock to join the Russian Church. To give the letter greater credit, it was carried by Kurds attired in Turkish uniforms, of which the sheikh has a large provision; but the men were recognised in Urmi.

The object of this move was not evident, but we conjectured that the sheikh has an eye to the future, and like some other notables, wishes to make influence with Russia in a safe way. To him, as to all natives of the country, the presence of the Russian Mission has a political much more

than a religious significance. This result can hardly have escaped the senders of the Mission, though some of the missionaries themselves are probably innocent of any worldly aim. The other Missions, English, American, French, and German, may probably be acquitted of a conscious political purpose; but however pure their motives, it is always difficult to persuade the natives of their complete sincerity, and indirectly they must have a national importance, for the prestige of their country is affected by their actions and their character. Unfortunately, too, their activity and success in protecting their adherents are looked on sometimes as a measure of the power of their several countries. To the single-minded missionary this fact is a stumbling-block and a temptation, but a statesman cannot afford to ignore it. Spiritually it is well for English missionaries that their government loves them little, and it may be a mark of grace in the government itself that it refrains from using them for political ends; but there is no doubt that this virtuous abstinence costs our political influence dear.

However, the sheikh, if report be true, seems to think even English friendship worth cultivating, for in 1903, when the Persian duty on tobacco was raised to seventy-five per cent. and the custom-house refused to be bribed at a reasonable rate, there was a rumour that he had written to the English ambassador in Stamboul and offered to send all his stock of tobacco for sale to English merchants. In return for this favour he would no doubt expect a little friendly use of British influence, but we who heard the rumour hoped that it was true and that this priceless occasion might not be let slip, for the sheikh's tobacco is not a thing lightly to be rejected by a

wise nation. The Englishman, returned from that happy neighbourhood to his native land, sadly wanders from one tobaccoist to another and finds no solace. Your boasted "Arcadias" and such like are crude and impure compounds to a palate attuned to the insinuating delicacy of Shamdinan tobacco, brought in leaf straight from the mountains and cut before your eyes to prevent admixture. At home we buy what is called Turkish tobacco; there is no such name there. Men distinguish district from district and village from village. Only a few miles, some slight variety of soil or cultivation, make a wide difference in the tobacco. No self-respecting smoker, if he can help himself, will use the tobacco grown in the Urmi valley; but the tobacco grown a few miles off, in the mountains just over the Turkish frontier, is the most prized of all, though there are differences of quality even there; that of Nochia contends for the supremacy with that of Walto. A large part of the best district falls within the dominions of the sheikh, and supplies him with a fine revenue, for he compels all his subjects to sell their tobacco to him, and it is only by stealth that any escapes his hands. Hence his annual harvest of tobacco reaches to hundreds of camel-loads, and his favour is worth cultivating.

He has another fine source of income. A few years ago he seized some country which commands one of the main routes of pilgrimage to the holy place of Kerbela, and has since levied toll on the passing pilgrims, who number thousands. This audacious impiety illustrates his character, and its impunity attests his strength. It would be easy to collect stories to illustrate both points, for many are current in the country, where his name is daily in every

mouth. Some of them relate to treachery and violence practised upon other Kurdish chiefs who have opposed him. They may well discourage opposition, but one or two of his neighbours are still bold enough to oppose him, and even gain temporary successes. In the autumn of 1902 there was a battle, in which several hundreds were engaged, between his troops and a smaller chief Bedru Khan Beg, of whose doings mention is made elsewhere. By the account of one of the combatants, a Syrian subject of Bedru's, this engagement ended in a glorious victory for his side. It is to be feared that the sheikh will not be content to let things rest so. A few months after, when he had encounters with the Turks in the direction of Mosul, it was reported that he had again had the worst of the fighting; but such distant skirmishes do not shake his power.

Of the Christians under him it need not be said that they are oppressed and powerless. He prevents the visits of Europeans and, so far as he can, the opening of schools in the Christian villages. Happily he is too intelligent to exterminate profitable subjects, for if he desired to do so, they would be helpless.

But such a despotic power as this is unusual in Kurdistan, and we will turn to a district and to events which better illustrate the normal state of the country, where the Kurds themselves are usually divided and the petty chiefs are at feud. These last words call to mind a noteworthy distinction between Kurds and Syrians. The latter are the more democratic. In speaking of them one uses a local name, "the men of" such and such a village or district. But Kurds, if they are specified by any addition,—and usually they are spoken of only as the Kurds, or by the tribal name,

as the Begzadi or the Herkai—are described by the name of their chief. This distinction indicates a real difference of manners, for the headman (called *malik* or *kokaia*) of a Syrian village has not the rights or the powers of a Kurdish chief and cannot oppress his fellow-villagers in the same way, and often has less personal influence than some other member of the village.¹ So likewise Syrian feuds are not between chief and chief, but between village and village. Among Kurds the ascendancy of the chief is much greater, and there is a very visible outward difference between him and his poorer followers. Nevertheless he is not, except in such cases as that of the Sheikh of Shamsdin, despotic, and may be forced to act against his will by his followers.

Some very recent events show well the normal state of most parts of Kurdistan. In Tergawar, a mountain district about three hours' ride to the west of Urmi, there was much disturbance in the spring of 1903. The district, though hilly, is cultivated in many parts, and full of small villages not very far apart. Many of these are inhabited by Syrians only, and in others Syrians and Kurds live together, but the Kurds altogether greatly outnumber the Christians, who when fully mustered can raise at most a thousand fighting men. Nevertheless they can as a rule hold their own, unless the Kurds, which seldom happens, unite to attack them. For the Syrians of Tergawar are at least as warlike as the Kurds, and the men of one large village, Mawana, have a formidable name, and their chief warrior Bajan, who

¹ The *malik*, it should be noted, is not like the *agha*, the owner of a village. In some districts the village is owned by a Mussulman, who appoints the headman. In some Turkish districts the appointment rests with Mar Shimoon, to whom some villages pay a small due.

holds a rank in the Persian army, is feared by all Kurds, as is testified by the fact that he is reported once to have taken prisoner eight Kurds single-handed.

In the time I speak of, when the snows had melted, and men began to take out their flocks to pasture, a quarrel rose between some Kurds and the Syrians of Balulan, a village near to Mawana, both laying claim to pasture in one spot. The two parties stood on opposite hills, and when the altercation grew hot, one of the Syrians fired, and wounded one of the Kurds, who unfortunately was a favourite son of their chief. There was no more blood shed that day, and it was hoped that the chief would consent to take blood-money and drop the feud. But after some negotiation he at last refused, and a few days later word came to the city that the Kurds were gathering to attack Balulan. A European who was there at the time counted close on three hundred, and these were not all. The Syrians, as we heard afterwards, had only thirty men with guns in the village. The story of the fight which followed reached the city soon after by the mouth of some of the combatants.

The Kurds attacked late in the afternoon and the fight continued till sunrise the next day. At the beginning the Syrians went in a body to the church of Mar Tuma (St. Thomas) in their village, and paid their vows to the saint and invoked his assistance. After this, as they told us, they felt confident of victory. The attack, as is usual, was gradual, both parties using cover. There were no heavy losses, but at last the Kurds made their way into the outskirts of the village and burnt one or two houses, and the defenders were hard pressed. They were relieved at the right moment by a reinforcement of

twenty men from Mawana, who took the Kurds by surprise, and killing several, forced their way in. Their charge, and the shout they raised, so shook the Kurds, who did not know the size of the reinforcement, that they presently retired, and the village was saved for the time.

The losses were small. The Kurds owned to fourteen men killed, and may have lost more. None of the Syrians were hit, except two women, who were wounded accidentally. The smallness of the losses diminishes the dignity of the victory; but none the less it was a good fight, and if the Kurds had got in, there would have been enough of Syrian dead. The relieving party at least might boast of their achievement. For twenty men to set off to the relief of a place besieged by several hundred, is almost impudent. The reason of their small number was that Bajan, their proper commander, was at this time excommunicated by his Church by reason of the misdoings of a scandalous son, and so could not lead his men out as usual, but permitted the departure of a volunteer force.

For a little while after these doings the Syrians in Tergawar were jubilant, and declared that the Kurds were so cowed that they scarcely ventured to lead out their flocks to pasture. But more cautious people felt the matter would not end so pleasantly, and just at the end of May the trouble came. One evening news came down to the city that all the Kurds of Tergawar had risen, that they had burnt several villages, and that fifteen Syrians had been burnt alive; and finally that the Sheikh's men were coming over the border to help. On the following days parties from Tergawar kept coming down to the city, and we learnt more accurately what was happening.

The story of the Sheikh's coming

was false, but it was true that all the Kurds of the district had risen, and they must have numbered some thousands. A party of them came down and carried off some sheep of the Mawana men. On news of this a force started from the village in pursuit of the raiders, and this time it was headed by Bajan. It pursued for some miles, till it found itself in danger of being overwhelmed and began to retire. At a village named Shibani one of the Syrians was hit and killed, and thirteen or fourteen of his companions stayed behind to hide the body for fear it should be mutilated. Bajan called on them to follow, as he could not stay to protect them, but they did not obey and were cut off in the village by the Kurds. The village, which is inhabited both by Kurds and Syrians, belongs to a brother of Bedru Khan Beg. It is reported that when the Kurds came up to Shibani this man, as owner, gave them leave to burn the village. They attacked the part in which the Syrians were, and fought them from house to house, and at last burnt or suffocated the remnant by means of lighted straw thrust in at the door and the hole in the roof. This was the burning of which we had heard. It was not a bloodless victory. It is said that one of the Syrians killed a deacon who had been down to visit the Mission a week or two before, shot four Kurds, and was himself shot by the last before he died.

The rest of the Mawana men got home with difficulty, Bajan leading his horse, which had been shot in two places. About the same time the Kurds came down on several smaller villages in the neighbourhood of Mawana. From one of these they were turned back by a party from Balulan, but afterwards reached it by a circuit and burnt it. It is said that one or two women were burnt

alive in this or one of the other villages, probably not by design, but because they feared to come out, the rest of the inhabitants having already escaped. In the course of the next few days several other villages were burnt or looted, most of them being empty, for the inhabitants had fled with their portable property towards the city. The panic extended beyond Tergawar, for one village close to the city was raided, from another on the opposite side sheep were carried off, and several others were threatened. Families coming down to the city for refuge were seen on all the roads.

Meanwhile Mawana was threatened by the main body of the Kurds. Men had come in from some of the nearer villages, so that it had a garrison of about three hundred men with guns; but they were short of ammunition and could not have resisted a steady assault. Happily the Kurds delayed attack, and armed parties of Syrians made their way down to the city and gathered cartridges as best they could. These were hard to find, for the Mussulmans refused to sell to Christians, favouring the Kurds; but gradually they acquired a stock, part of which was secretly contributed by the Governor of the city. Fearing the charge of favouring Christians he dared not give them openly, but sent them out to a village on the way to Tergawar and privately instructed the men of Mawana where to find them. At last they were strong enough to hold their own, and the Kurds feared to attack. Moreover, when they had been out a little while, old feuds revived and they began to loot one another's villages, and this hastened their dispersal. Thus Mawana escaped for the time and the Kurds dispersed. It is interesting to note that the garrison of Mawana received one unexpected reinforcement. One day I met some

Kurds outside the city and made enquiries who they were. It appeared that they belonged to a tribe which was at feud with the Kurds attacking Mawana (the Begzadi), and were going up to help the Syrians. This they actually did. As they were only a small party, and were taking the weaker side, this was sportsmanlike behaviour.

The events of this little war are thoroughly characteristic, especially its futile conclusion. The indecision and disunion of the Kurds are the only safeguard of the Syrians, and saved them then as often before. Nevertheless the issue was serious enough, for not only were villages destroyed, but the standing crops were injured, and this will mean present famine. Moreover the war was more bitter than usual, for the Kurds were mutilating the dead, which is beyond their usual practice, and though peace has been patched up the district is still so unsettled that it seems doubtful whether the Syrians will be able to retain their homes in it.

The behaviour of Bedru is not the least characteristic part of the matter. He has long been on friendly terms with the English Mission, and some three months before the fighting in Tergawar a member of the staff went up with me to pay him a visit in the mountains, as he had frequently desired to show us sport. The country was then deep in snow, but for the first part of the way we were able to ride; higher up we had to lead our horses through drifts waist-deep, a good preparation for the next day's work. We slept at a Syrian house in the village with the members of the family and some of the domestic animals, and at sunrise next morning went up to Bedru's house, where we found him with a party of Kurds and Syrians, all carrying guns and ready to start. He is a very tall

man, handsome and powerfully built, but spare. A Syrian friend had warned us that we should have hard work, for "Bedru was like a bear," indifferent to cold and fatigue; and he looked as if this were true. There was a short delay, for the Kurds condemned my English boots as useless and sent to the village to procure a pair of native shoes of rough wool, which proved most excellent in slippery places. They are tied on with strings and not only catch the ground firmly, but keep the feet thoroughly warm, though of course the snow comes through them at once. About four hours walking through the mountains brought us to the post where we were to lie in wait for the wild sheep, which were the game we had come to hunt. Men had been sent up to drive them towards us, but the herd took off down another valley and we never saw a head. The walk home included a partial wetting in a stream bridged by treacherous ice, and an unspeakable scramble up the course of a snow-slide, the only practicable way up the side of a precipitous valley. Another hunt was promised for the next day, but in the morning, somewhat to our relief, Bedru sent word that he was a little tired and would not hunt that day. Instead he invited us to call on him. He received us well, and by way of contrast to our yesterday's experience, we sat for several hours in a room heated to suffocation by an iron stove. Our host was much gratified by the present of a large many-bladed knife, and declared that he would rather have had it than a gun; he certainly had guns enough, for he showed us an armoury of excellent rifles of European make. The conversation turned chiefly on a feud between two neighbouring villages and on the Syrians under him. He declared that he found them excellent subjects and

knew that it was to his interest to treat them well. Yet he was evidently a faithful Mussulman, for having asked us the time and heard that it was past twelve, he hurried from the room without apology to say his mid-day prayers. On his return he caused us to be regaled with an Arcadian luncheon of roast potatoes, followed by cream and honey; the potatoes he politely skinned himself and handed to us. We left him with good-will and a feeling that his professions of friendship for us and for the Syrians were not insincere. In the evening we were gratified by fresh evidence of his appreciation. We learnt from a Syrian that, when we were expected at his house, Bedru was in conference with some Sayyids who had come up on business. They, hearing of our approach, declared that they would not sit in a room with infidels. Thereupon Bedru, to save their scruples, turned them out of the house, informing them (with doubtful truth) that we were much greater people in our country than they in theirs.

This visit left in our minds a kindly feeling for our host, and his share in the subsequent fighting distressed and somewhat perplexed us. He still professes friendship for the Christians, and his friends declare that he is sincere and was forced into the war by his men, and especially by his brother, but it is believed by others that he was the chief instigator of the attack. His real mind is not to be fathomed. His professions are not merely hypocritical, for his Christian subjects themselves declare that he treats them well and are his warmest advocates. His desire to retain the friendship of the English Mission is no doubt also genuine, and it is probable that any visitors would be as hospitably received by him as we were. But his friendship, if genuine, is doubt-

less partly politic, and in the case of a feud it does not hinder him from taking the side of his own people, or from sharing their desire for vengeance. This is natural enough, and in this his attitude probably resembles that of other Kurdish chiefs of the better sort. At the best, his character is ambiguous.

But, if rumour be true, there are some few chiefs whose good deeds are less equivocal. Of these I know only by report, but one story received on good authority well deserves to be recorded, and makes a pleasant relief to this sombre tale of Kurdish manners. It is said that at the time of the Armenian massacres the Kurdish chief of a district overlooking Armenia, having heard that massacres were threatened in the plain below him, took horse at once and rode down to the *kaimakam* of the district and requested that there should be no massacres there. When the *kaimakam* was evasive, he reinforced the request by stating that if any massacres were permitted he would bring his men down from the mountain and attack him. This threat saved the Armenians in that neighbourhood. Unhappily I cannot record this worthy's name. The story throws some light on the efforts of the benevolent Ottoman government to stay the hand of the blood-thirsty and uncontrollable Kurd.

There is one district in Kurdistan where the usual relation of Kurds and Syrians is reversed. Of this I can only speak at second-hand, but my information was full and trustworthy, and the state of things is too unique and interesting to pass without record. On the upper course of the Zab there are some mountain valleys inhabited chiefly by Syrians. The name of the district is Tyari, and the country is so inaccessible that the inhabitants are independent of all government and fear neither Turks

nor Kurds. There are in some places a few yards of level and cultivated land along the river-bed, but beyond this the mountains rise precipitously on either side. The houses are not gathered in villages, but perched at intervals along the side of the valley. In spite of the precipice, the people practise agriculture. They have orchards in the bed of the river, and build themselves minute fields on the slope by enclosing a space with walls and filling it up with earth brought down from a distance by the women. And these fields yield abundantly, for a narrow rocky valley grows intensely hot in summer and acts as a forcing-house. The fields produce a crop of wheat and a second of millet; and the vineyards and orchards thrive no less. Besides this the people have flocks and even a few oxen for ploughing, but horses are unknown, for they cannot face the mountain road, and mules are the only beasts of burden used. In spite of the fertility of the land, the people are poor, for at the best fields a few yards square produce no surplus, and there is little means of raising money to buy commodities from outside.

But if poor, they are not humble. They account themselves the most aristocratic branch of the Syrian people, and look down on the rest, above all upon the dwellers in the plain. Moreover among the Tyarai themselves family pride is strong, and the jealousy of the different stocks is the cause of feuds and has proved a great impediment to European travellers. Here, as elsewhere, pride of birth has both good and ill effects. It causes quarrels and fosters idleness, for the Tyarai are said to despise manual labour and leave it to the women; but on the other hand it delivers the people from any tinge of servility and makes them high-spirited and honourable after their own code. Theft, for

instance, is held utterly shameful. A Tyari boy in the school, suspected of theft, merely replied, "Rabbi, it is impossible—I am an *Ashirat* (freeman)" and thought no other defence necessary.

Highway robbery indeed is scarcely held dishonourable. But this is not so much robbery as an act of war. Any stranger who enters the country is regarded as an enemy until he has proved himself a friend; and the taking of his goods is the milder form of protest. A stranger whose character is more suspect, is likely to lose his life. For this reason Tyari is seldom visited by strangers, and Turkish officials do not venture there. Once or twice a *zaptieh* has been foolish enough to enter the valley, but he has not returned. Of one of these it is related that when he had come to a house, the men retired and left the women to deal with him. When he had eaten, they put him to bed, as is usual there, in a large sheet of thick felt, one side of which serves for mattress, and the other is folded over as a coverlet. When the *zaptieh* was asleep, the women quietly sewed up the open side of this felt bed, and so secured him that he could not struggle. After this he was not seen again, but his body might probably have been found in the Zab.

Another foolish *zaptieh* ventured a little while ago to stop two Tyarai who were coming down from the mountains, and proposed to take something from them. One of the two was afterwards taken and imprisoned at Mosul for the murder of this *zaptieh*, but after some time he was released, as nothing could be proved against him.

Such acts as these are not to be called murder, for anyone in Turkish uniform is to the Tyarai an enemy and a spy, and it is a public duty to

destroy him. And the Tyarai can do more than kill zaptiehs. Though they have only matchlocks against rifles, they hold their own with the Kurds, and have repelled Turkish expeditions. At the worst they can leave their houses and take to the mountains, and when they do so the enemy is most in danger. For the paths into the valley often admit only one traveller at a time, and the defenders have only to wait until they reach a difficult point, and then cut them off.

Once indeed their fastness was penetrated, by Bedru Khan Beg, that formidable chief, who about sixty years ago massacred many thousands of Christians in Kurdistan, and among the rest, a large proportion of the Tyarai. But it is now long since their valleys were invaded.

From what has already been said, it will be seen that they are not only independent, but unruly. Yet they are not altogether lawless, for they obey a customary law of their own, which is said to be partly based upon the canon law of their Church. To their Church and to their religion they are hotly loyal, and I am told that they will not suffer a man even to utter a word against either. Yet it need scarcely be said that their idea of Christianity is imperfect, and the priests are little better instructed than the rest. It was either from Tyari or Tkhoma, a neighbouring district, that a priest wrote to the members of the English Mission to express his gratitude to them and his regret that he was unable to help them by teaching in a village school, because he was too ignorant. But as he could not do this, he begged them to let him know if at any time they desired any obnoxious person, who might travel through the district, to be waylaid, and promised that he would attend to the matter with zeal.

Another trifle illustrates the simplicity of priestly morals in Tyari. Priests are forbidden to drink more than three cups of wine, and they observe the rule; but in Tyari the cup in common use is a huge bowl, and so the restriction is not severely felt. Happily it is reported that Tyarai can carry incredible quantities of wine, although it is drunk new. The people are not drunkards, but on such occasions as a wedding feast the party sit down to a jar of wine about as large as a hogshead, and finish it in the course of a day or two. Even they cannot carry this unmoved; but it is reported as a peculiarity of the Tyarai that they grow loving over their cups, while the men of Tkhoma grow quarrelsome.

To make the picture complete it should be added that in Tyari there are a few tame Kurds, to use the native epithet.

An account of Tyari and the neighbouring districts is to be found in Sir Henry Layard's *NINEVEH AND ITS REMAINS* (chapter vii. of the abridged edition). He visited it just at the time of the massacres above mentioned, and his description of the havoc wrought is heart-rending. Read beside that tragic history, the account here given of the same people seems indecently light-hearted, but fortunately the Tyarai of to-day, with all their hardships, have a happier lot than their fathers. Yet the story reminds one that Kurdish persecution of Christians has sometimes been a more terrible thing than might appear from these pages; and in that instance, at least, the blame lay with the Kurds and not with the Turks. Nevertheless it does not invalidate the statement that Kurds and Christians can at times live in comparative amity. The sympathy of the Kurds in Tkhoma for their Christian neighbours, which he there mentions, bears out the asser-

tion. The discrepancy is not hard to explain. The ordinary villagers of one district, whether Kurds or Christians, living the same life, and having similar interests, often brought into contact and united by ties of locality, naturally acquire a fellow-feeling for one another. The mere business of living is too absorbing to leave much space for religious animosity. But the Kurd, like other men, can be stirred into fanaticism, and when roused is capable of greater brutality than most. Such was the case in the time of Bedr Khan Beg, whose brutality Sir Henry Layard appears to attribute to fanaticism. It may easily be supposed that a man of such power and influence, if he happens himself to be fanatical, communicates his own fury to his followers. In short the Kurd is habitually a robber, but only occasionally a fanatic.

Before quitting the subject of Kurdistan, let me append a few detached stories which illustrate local manners. Most chiefs of importance maintain a Jew in their village, who conducts his master's finances, and also trades on his own account, supplying the people with exotic goods. One of these Jews, who had some property, was robbed by a neighbouring chief, and went to his master to entreat him to recover the stolen goods. The chief replied that this was impossible, but that he would be most happy to go himself and rob the other chief's Jew, if this would be a consolation.

Another story shows the Kurd in a more heroic light than we have yet seen. Unfortunately it has a very legendary air, but it is still current in the neighbourhood, and the suspected details may be only the embellishment of a true story. There is a precipitous hill overlooking the

plain of Solduz, and it is said that this was once the stronghold of a predatory Kurdish chief. The story goes that he acquired the place by the very same trick by which Dido acquired the site of Carthage, the device of the ox-hide. Perhaps this detail has been imported from abroad, but its occurrence in this very remote spot is noteworthy. However he acquired his fortress, this chief at last made himself so unbearable that an army was sent to subdue him. The fortress was impregnable, but after a long siege the besiegers contrived to cut off the water-supply by the aid of a mule, which, having been kept without water, was turned loose and detected the source of the spring which flowed underground into the citadel. When this was blocked, the Kurd, after throwing the non-combatants over the precipice, went out with his men and died fighting. The story is a very cento of familiar incidents.

The following story is of recent date and the hero of it is a chief whose district lies near to Urmi. Being unable to collect a debt from a neighbouring chieftain, he put forth a notice that he would give a reward for the head of any Sayyid in the dominions of his debtor. The Sayyids thereupon put such pressure upon their own chief that he paid the debt. This expedient seems to show a sense of humour. I believe it was the same chieftain who, having attended a conclave with a number of Mullahs and Sayyids, was heard to remark during the proceedings, "There are a great many asses here." This perhaps can hardly be called humour, but it created a sensation. A little freedom of the same kind might expedite the proceedings of more august assemblies.

F. R. EARP.

at a young age, he got a job at a garage.